

THE BARONET RAG-PICKER



CHARLES S. COOM

369D

To

Mr. John Shepard
With best wishes of
C. M. C. Atkinson.

Boston, Sept. 18, 1905.

THE BARONET
RAG-PICKER



“CAROLINE CROYDEN”

THE BARONET RAG-PICKER

*A Story of Love
and Adventure*

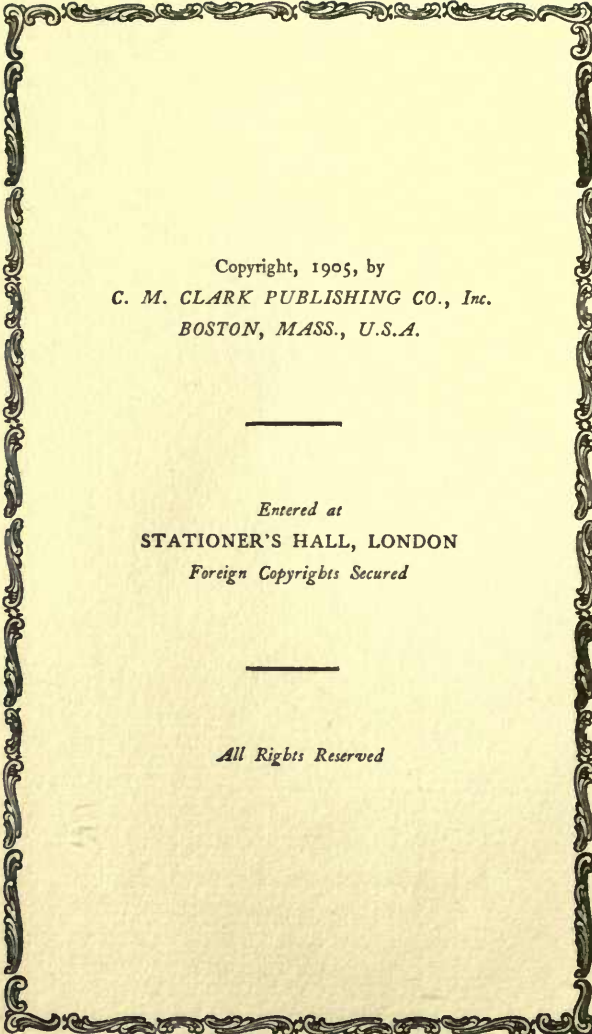
BY

CHARLES S. COOM



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INTRODUCTION

THE coast of Cornwall, noted for its rugged outline and precipitous cliffs, and made historical by the many disastrous shipwrecks that have occurred on its shores, is dotted with fishing-villages and small towns, some of which have become famous as health resorts, besides possessing the enchantment derivable from many an ancient legend; others again are simply what a cursory glance reveals them to be, viz., the abode of individuals in the humbler walks of life, who obtain a livelihood from the exhaustless fishing grounds, or from agricultural pursuits.

Among the latter is the village of East Looe, in later years elevated on the polling lists to the rank of a township; but at the period of this story comprising nothing more than a modest fishing-village, embodying in its industries a small ship-yard, from which a few fishing smacks were annually launched; a rope-walk, in which, to this day, a solitary hand-spinner

can be seen perambulating up and down, spinning ropes which are warranted to stand all requisite strain; there is a sail loft where sails are made of substantial duck-cloth, and underneath is a room devoted to the making and repairing of nets.

In those days a visitor would not be impressed with the commercial importance of East Looe. There was an air of rest about the village throughout the entire week, corresponding more to the Sabbath day in larger towns; and even those engaged in regular duties performed them in such a perfunctory manner that the labour usually attending it seemed to be abolished. The very children wending their way to the little school-house at the back of the ancient church seemed less boisterous than obtained elsewhere; indeed it is to be wondered at how East Looe ever arose from its lethargy to become enlisted as a town, only the wonder in this case is not to be construed in a derogatory sense; for there are too few places on this globe where the mind can find rest from the excitement of the world's cares.

There was possibly too much longevity in East Looe. The healthful atmosphere and model way of living had combined to produce

families of many generations; and though a doctor was numbered among its inhabitants, his ability to exist was best known to himself; for his services were rarely in demand, and then only when the generations were added to.

The old fishermen, whose advanced age precluded them from following the arduous occupation of dragging the seines, could be daily seen lounging around the cliffs with telescopes in hand, at intervals scanning the ocean, ostensibly in search of schools of fish, to which their offices were relegated; but in reality to witness some passing vessel, and to dream of days long floated by.

Beyond the cliffs, approached by a serpentine road which led through an extensive lawn dotted with clumps of rhododendron and other flowering shrubs, stood the old manor-house of Croyden, bounded on one side by a pretentious bit of woodland, which contained a rookery, without which no country residence was considered complete. Stretching far into the background was the entailed estate of Croyden, comprising many acres of rich farmlands, with the appurtenances thereto belonging; the contiguity of which estate formed the nucleus of the village, as indeed is the

proximity of similar manors the creation of all the other towns and villages on the coast.

In the year 1867 the very reverend rector of the old parish church of East Looe died. He was found dead in an arm-chair in his library by his aged house-keeper. He had not complained of sickness, and consequently the doctor had not attended upon him; indeed, but a few hours previous he had been seen tottering about the churchyard, his long, hoary locks playfully fondled by the sea breezes; he had spoken to one of his parishioners, placing his hand to his ear, and exclaiming, "I am deaf," as was his usual custom. He died of the disease peculiar to East Looe, which is made less shocking to Christian ears by the coroner's established verdict in such cases, viz., "Died by the visitation of God."

The old rector was buried in one of the aisles of the ancient church, by the side of his wife, who had not long preceded him; and a plain slab, giving his name and age, covers his grave.

The Baronet Rag-Picker

CHAPTER I

A FEW INTRODUCTIONS

IT was several months after the death of the old rector of East Looe before his successor was appointed, and then according to no law but that which is commonly termed hap-hazard, the choice fell upon my honoured father, the Reverend Robert Gardner, who, up to that period, had been vicar at Ware. It transpired that my father had not even a speaking acquaintance with Sir Anthony Croyden, the ancestral owner of the manor of Croyden aforesaid, to whose choice the preferment belonged.

I was surprised, therefore, to receive word at my lodging in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, from which bulwark of the nation's laws I had recently received an official document engrossed on parchment, making known to all whom it might concern, that Edmund Keith Gardner had passed a successful examination,

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entitling him to expound the laws in any part of her Majesty's dominions; that the home of my boyhood had been translated into East Looe, and that a hearty welcome awaited me there.

After all the long months of study, with its attendant headaches and fear for the result (for passing a law-examination is no sinecure) I, Edmund Keith Gardner, had obtained that glorious Charter, and now I felt limp and helpless; a lassitude created by long days and nights of constant poring over musty lore had crept into my bones, and not being likely to have even an hap-hazard call, as sometimes falls to the lot of the clergy, I was glad to pack my few belongings, including my precious parchment, and take train for East Looe.

I had not deemed myself of sufficient importance to notify my parents of my coming, so I was permitted to walk from the station along the road leading past the old manor, through the narrow street of East Looe, which also led into the churchyard; and from there I made an ignominious entry into the rectory hall by tumbling over a pile of books which had been deposited on the floor to await final disposition.

My next step was to embrace my parents, who appeared begrimed with dirt, for they were both working vigorously on the new broom theory. Having in a short time exhausted all I had to relate, I took the keys of the old church for the purpose of exploring it.

There is a quaint sameness about the external appearance of these ancient churches with their effigies, sun-dials, and for the most part undecipherable hieroglyphics; but the interior usually comprehends something modern.

The old church of East Looe, however, boasts of little that is not ancient; the aisles contained tombs covered with slabs recording the names of the tenants beneath; the marble font in which the infant Looeite is baptised is supposed to be a relic of Druidical times; and the seats were old beyond the conception of any of the inhabitants. Quaint inscriptions over the Gothic arches had become partially obliterated by the over-zealous use of whitewash. The vestry contained, besides a table and two chairs, a collection of broken-backed Bibles, and on the table were three books, representing the register of births, marriages and deaths, respectively.

I opened the books in succession, and discov-

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ered that in all human probability the registers would do service for many generations to come.

In another day I had introduced myself to the doctor; had turned the wheel for the spinner at the rope-walk; helped to caulk a boat at the ship-yard; and became acquainted with all the arts and sciences practised in the village.

On the third day, to make the notice of my advent complete, I visited the manor-house.

I seem to have remembered this day beyond any eventful cause for so doing; it has always appeared clear, and the recollection brings a happiness distinct from any other occasion.

As the mansion loomed in sight, I intuitively felt the seclusion of the spot; a colony of rooks were drowsily cawing from the rookery overhead, otherwise there was no evidence of life.

I walked to the main porch, and raising the huge knocker its fall resounded throughout the long hall as though in remonstrance at being disturbed after years of idleness; and to make this impression more realistic, a white-capped servant girl came around a corner of the house to reconnoitre, and after scanning me with a wondering look retreated on a run, finally reappearing at the now open porch-

door, whose hinges manifested opposition by creaking dismally.

I presented my card and was about to retire, when a middle-aged lady, accompanied by a beautiful girl, stepped from a room adjoining the hallway, and taking the card, addressed me, saying:

“Mr. Gardner, we heard indirectly of your arrival, and we are very pleased to welcome you to East Looe, and to the mansion, too, for that matter. For private reasons, we have not entertained for many years, but it does not mean that everybody is not welcome to its hospitality, nevertheless. It is lunch-time; will you be good enough to join us? This is my daughter, Caroline Croyden, Mr. Gardner.”

The young lady gave a graceful bow, and we entered the dining-room, and were instantly joined by an old gentleman, whom the elder lady addressed, saying:

“Father, this young gentleman is the rector’s son, Edmund Keith Gardner, who intends practising law;” then turning to me, she said:

“You are introduced to Sir Anthony Croyden.”

The old gentleman extended his hand and

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shook mine cordially, at the same time fixing his eyes intently on mine, and saying:

“A lawyer, eh! but you never intend putting out your shingle in East Looe?”

“I have not quite gotten over the surprise of having passed my examination,” I answered, “but I think well of settling down with my parents, for a while at least.”

“It will never do,” commented the old gentleman, “you are far too young to bury yourself alive in this place. How old are you?”

“Father!” remonstrated the lady.

“Tut, tut, my dear,” replied the old gentleman, “men, particularly young men, are never any younger.”

“I am twenty-four, Sir Anthony,” I laughingly responded.

“Ah, poor George! just like my poor dear George!” and excusing himself, Sir Anthony walked away, leaving me with the ladies to wonder who poor George might be. The elder lady sat with downcast eyes, whilst her daughter put her arms lovingly around her mother’s neck.

After lunch I begged permission to withdraw, and was invited to call at any time I felt

so disposed; that no ceremony was given or required.

On returning homewards, I found myself, for want of more strenuous occupation, deeply in love with Caroline Croyden, and imagining many vain things, besides building castles in the air; but such impressions are innocent enough and properly belong to the right-minded youth; for if it stultifies the growth of high business aspirations, it also prevents unholy thoughts from entering and taking possession.

CHAPTER II

MAKING A START

I HAD been a resident of East Looe exactly one week, and had made myself familiar with all the delightful walks in the neighbourhood, as well as with the bays and coves in the vicinity, and at last decided to make a start in my profession; for however much I had built castles in the air of becoming great in expounding the law, I discovered that dreaming was no way to accomplish it; and that if I succeeded even in a moderate degree, I would have to study and practise harder than during the period when I was articulated.

To carry out this laudable determination, therefore, I rented a small building located on the heights overlooking the sea, which I discovered had been used at one period of its history as a Bryanite chapel; and at all times as a temporary resting place, when the sea gave up her dead.

Having obtained possession of this uncanny place, I immediately set at work to make it suitable as a place of study.

I first had the flooring and other woodwork well scrubbed, and the walls papered; then I furnished it with a ponderous table and two chairs, and spread a few rush mats around the floor.

I piled my law books on one end of the table so as to make the place look as formidable as possible, and put a sign in the window, "Edmund Keith Gardner, Attorney-at-law, Deeds and Wills a Specialty, Hours 10 A. M. till 6 P. M."

Providing myself with several reams of paper, I sat down the first day my office was fit for occupancy, determined to make myself heard from, if not to become great.

I had as constant companion a large water-spaniel, and it stretched itself with a sigh on one of the mats, and watched me intently from under its bushy eyebrows, playing a tattoo on the floor with its tail, whenever at long intervals I favoured it with a glance.

I have often thought since that the dog instinctively felt, from his knowledge of my peregrinations, that my present devotion to

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work was only temporary, for its eyes carried a comical expression whenever I gazed upon it, and its tattoo seemed to indicate, "Keep on, old fellow, the sooner it is over the better for both."

The first day I wrote unceasingly, making a draft of a lease; the second day I wrote until noon, when my fingers became cramped; I had overworked myself.

Dropping my pen I walked to the door, and from there I strolled towards the cliff, my dog running and barking joyously as if to say, "This is better, this is more natural."

Reaching the edge of the cliff, I gazed across the sea; a few ships were scudding along under a stiff breeze, and on the horizon the smoke of a steamer was faintly visible.

Presently my gaze was attracted to an old gentleman seated on one of the large rocks on the shore immediately beneath the cliff on which I stood; the depth at this point being about forty feet. The tide was flowing and he appeared to be contemplating the waves dashing against the rock on which he sat; finally he arose and revealed the person of Sir Anthony Croyden.

"Give up your dead! George, my boy, come



“ Give up your dead! George, my boy, come back to me”

back to me!" shouted the old man; then lifting his hat and placing his hand on his temples, he tottered across the slippery rocks along the shimmering pebbly beach, and ascending a beaten path to the cliff above, he proceeded on his way to the mansion.

I returned to my office in a thoughtful mood; I tried to resume my work, but I had lost all interest in it. The apparition on the rock had opened up something more real to me than the morbid study of law, something that suited my present unsettled state of mind.

I was thinking over the old man's cry, "Give up your dead!" when I was startled by the cry, "rags and bones!" and at the same moment a stalwart individual passed the window, having two granary sacks thrown over his shoulders. I went to the door and gazed after his retreating figure.

Resuming my seat, my thoughts merged from "Give up your dead!" to "rags and bones!" and became so commingled that I fell into a doze, to be aroused long after my usual quitting time by my father shaking me and saying, "Edmund, you are evidently overdoing your studies; there is time for all things under the sun."

CHAPTER III

AN INDIFFERENT PROFESSION

THERE were few things in the natural course of events to disturb the equanimity of East Looe; occasionally a ship would be wrecked on its treacherous rocks, or the body of a drowned sailor would be found washed on the beach, but by far the most engrossing topics the inhabitants had indulged in for many a decade were the sermons of the new rector, how the young lawyer would obtain a livelihood, and who the individual who plied the calling of rags and bones collector might be.

Now it appeared that the individual designated as "Rags and Bones" had made his advent on the day of my arrival, and failing to get any satisfaction from the strange visitor, the doctor and several others had appealed to me for a solution of his presence, which I was unable to gratify. All that could be discovered was that "Rags and Bones" had entered

the village and invaded its narrow streets, vociferating at intervals the burden of his song, adding occasionally, as though to relieve the monotony, "and doctors' bottles."

Although collectors of rags and bones are familiar objects in all towns of any appreciable size, East Looe had never before in its history harboured such a character within its precincts; consequently the presence of the present individual occasioned no small amount of gossip, especially in view of his taciturnity.

It was several weeks before the inhabitants of East Looe recovered from the surprise of this innovation, but they gradually became accustomed to the call of "rags and bones"; and its owner became a familiar object to the villagers, who took scrupulous care to lay aside cast-off clothing for the new resident, for resident he became, having selected a small cottage above the cliffs. Here during the time that he was not engaged in collecting rags and bones, he devoted himself to the cultivation of the little garden attached to the cottage, and the flowers not only grew in abundance therein, but seemed fresher than elsewhere in the village.

In most towns the character of such a

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strange individual, with such a calling, would have been investigated, but the assurance of the man saved him any interference.

On being asked his name by the bailiff, he answered, "Your rent will be anticipated"; after this no person had the temerity to question him concerning his antecedents, so he was named after his calling, "Rags and Bones."

Occasionally Rags and Bones would be found walking among the rocks at the foot of the cliff; at other times he would be seen gazing at the waves beating the shore, and it was rumoured among the gossips that a figure corresponding to his had been seen in the churchyard lying among the graves during the twilight hours; but the villagers, prone to superstition, reconciled themselves to the belief that the churchyard was haunted.

It was significant that Rags and Bones never called at the mansion to ply his calling, although he was frequently seen walking in its vicinity and gazing across the lawn.

One day Rags and Bones was discovered by Sir Anthony Croyden occupied in looking across the lawn, and with his granary sacks thrown carelessly across his shoulders, when the old gentleman addressed him, saying:

“Come with me, man,” and leading him around the mansion, pointed to a lot of bones scattered around the dog-kennels, saying: “You can collect all these bones.”

Rags and Bones set to work assiduously, and gathered the bones together in heaps, and then put them in the bags.

The old gentleman stood and watched him, and chuckled: “Rags and bones, eh, a very indifferent calling, but I suppose somebody must collect them. Where did you come from?”

Rags and Bones looked at the old man curiously for a moment without answering; then placing the bags on his shoulders, he walked away.

Sir Anthony watched his retiring figure, remarking: “Big fellow, fine form, but a great villain, I’ve no doubt.”

CHAPTER IV

THE RESCUE

THE days and weeks were flying swiftly by, but no client put in an appearance, and will-making was usually neglected until the breath was about to leave the body; it was strictly an ante-mortem affair in East Looe, for there was a feeling prevalent among the inhabitants that if a man made his will in the blossom of health, he was likely soon to be in the paleness of death; it was perfectly clear, however, that those who made their wills around the vicinity of East Looe died very soon after for the reason set forth.

I had exhausted whole reams of paper drafting forms of deeds and wills, which in all probability would never be in requisition, and at last I began to feel that I was useless to the world, and looked upon the parchment I was once so proud of as a fraud and a failure.

I began to absent myself from the office, and spent my time in wandering aimlessly

about the shore; first I put up a notice that I would be back at a certain time, and took the precaution to lock the door; finally I omitted the notice, and left the door unlocked.

How long this condition of affairs would have lasted in the ordinary course of events, it is difficult to state, but what the resultant effect on my subsequent career would have been is not hard to conjecture were it not that my guardian angel, whoever he or she might be, had ordained otherwise and created a turning point in my life.

I have already related that the antiquated fishermen of East Looe were in the habit of lounging around the cliffs, telescoping the sea. On this particular day, which was delightful, the air being filled with the sweet perfume of myriads of wild-flowers, the old fishermen were out in force.

I had visited the mansion on the previous evening, as had gotten to be my habitual custom, and had been introduced to a nephew of Sir Anthony Croyden, Newton Bramble, a young man a few years my senior, who had come from Middlesex on a visit. His ungenerous shake of the hand at our introduction, and his reticence afterwards, were so notice-

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able that I took a dislike to him from the start. Caroline had informed me that her mother and herself were to go a-boating with this nephew on the following day at his invitation, and Caroline regretted that I was unable to accompany them, for I had foolishly resolved to avoid the nephew's society.

During the afternoon of that day I kept to my office, leaving the door open so that the sea-breezes might enter. I was deploring my seemingly idle life, and thinking of Caroline, when suddenly it seemed as though all the fish-horns in East Looe were on the rampage.

My dog barked, and springing to its feet, scampered across to where the old fishermen had now congregated. Realising that something unusual had occurred, I threw off my coat, and ran with all my might towards the cliff, and as I sped, a form rushed by me, bare-footed and hatless, with the speed of the roe, and reaching the edge of the precipice, bounded forward with a mighty spring and descended like a meteor among the rocks and surf sixty feet below, to his death I thought, for I felt that no man could plunge from such a dizzy height among such treacherous rocks without being mangled to pieces.

A few hundred feet from shore I espied a capsized boat, and, horror of horrors! two female forms were at the mercy of the waves.

The fishing-boats were moored on the lee shore; time would not admit of delay, and feeling that the lives of those in the waves depended on my own safety, I slid bodily down the cliff, catching at a jagged rock here and there, and finally about midway, shot out, landing on a promontory locally known as the "Black Rock"; and from thence I bounded into the sea, twenty feet below.

Rising to the surface I saw that the two females were still afloat, and with heart beating frantically with excitement, I skimmed the waters; but fast as I sped, there was an object before me which swam with the speed of an otter; there was not a ripple to indicate his motion, but that dark head sped on and finally reached the scene.

The time seemed ages to me before I did likewise, and there I found Caroline Croyden with her arms folded around my dog's neck; I interposed my body and supported her, and at the same moment looking for the safety of her mother, I discovered her supported on the

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bosom of Rags and Bones, who was making for the shore, from which numerous boats were now advancing.

Newton Bramble, who had been clinging to the capsized boat without attempting to render aid, seeing that the ladies were saved, proceeded to swim to shore.

The rescued were escorted to the rectory by my father, who had also been attracted by the unusual commotion, and from thence they were finally driven to the mansion, very little the worse for their immersion.

The little doctor had attended the ladies at the rectory, but finding his services unnecessary, called at my office, where Rags and Bones and myself had retired to collect ourselves.

The doctor placed his hand on the shoulder of the man who had risked his life so recklessly, and said: "Nature's nobleman."

Rags and Bones arose from his chair, and looking at me, and at the same time pointing to himself, said: "I am simply Rags and Bones"; then he left the office.

"Strange character," said the doctor.

"It's a strange case," I replied; "I fully expected to find his body mutilated on the rocks;

no stranger to this coast could have avoided certain death."

"It came near clearing out the entire family, and that would have meant a change of title," continued the doctor; "I remember well the last sad case."

"Will you kindly relate it?" I asked.

"Certainly. I had almost forgotten the only thing important to talk about in East Looe. It occurred some eighteen years ago. Sir Anthony had an only son, George by name. He was a clever sort of youth as youths go, and was well liked by everybody in the village. All the pretty girls had a smile for him, and he returned the compliment, even to smiling on Madge Morrill, the gipsy; but there was nothing bad about George, he loved them all simply because he was an affectionate fellow.

"Our rector, at that time, had an only daughter, Catherine Penistan, who was the pride of the village. George fell in love with her, and of course it was returned four-fold, as women are apt to do; but Sir Anthony forbade the match, on the ground that it was a departure from the old custom of his ancestors for the heir to marry outside of a title. The girl's father, not wishing to be a party to any

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disagreement, tried to persuade George to break the engagement, but finally married them. Sir Anthony thereupon denied George the shelter of the paternal roof, and as a result the couple lived at the rectory.

“And now the mysterious part of the affair comes in. George and his wife lived like two turtle doves together, regardless of the old gentleman’s ire, when suddenly George disappeared. There was evidence pointing to his having been drowned, but his body was never discovered. The facts leading up to the supposition are, that on the day following George’s disappearance the body of a well-dressed stranger was found on the shore, and papers found on the body indicated that George had been drowned. The vestry had been broken into, and the page containing the certificate of George’s marriage torn from the register; and it was conjectured that George had discovered the theft, and in attempting to arrest the robber, both lost their lives.

“The ill-news was broken to George’s wife, who took it so to heart that it was inferred she tried to drown herself. She was found on the beach in an unconscious condition, and for a long time she was looked upon as dead; but

she recovered, and after a few weeks a daughter was born, and the mother's sorrow became modified in caring for her child.

"Catherine continued to live with her father at the rectory for several months, until after the death of Lady Croyden, when Sir Anthony succeeded in persuading her that it was for her advantage to reside with him at the mansion; and they appear to have lived very happily.

"I am very glad that the accident to-day was so splendidly manœuvred; it might have been the most deplorable event that ever happened in East Looe."

"I hope Rags and Bones will not be stubborn, and refuse any pecuniary assistance Sir Anthony will certainly offer, but I feel that he will decline," I commented.

"So do I," replied the little doctor, and then he left me.

CHAPTER V

COURTSHIP AND DEATH

FOR several days after the rescue I had seen nothing of the inmates of the mansion, and I had again settled down to study, at intervals seriously contemplating the advisability of starting over again in some large town, when one day a knock came at my office door, followed by the entrance of Caroline Croyden. Her face was suffused with smiles, and extending her hand, she said:

“Mr. Gardner, this is the first time I have felt like facing the world again, for I am very much ashamed of the trouble we caused. How can I thank you for your bravery?” and turning to my dog, which lay on the mat, she stooped beside it, and patted it, saying: “And you, you dear doggie, how can I talk to you, you are so sensible?”

I made no answer, but gazed at the dear girl before me, content to hear her talk.

“Well, sir, are you going to scold me or to make out a bill for damages? I will try to be content with either or both.”

“Miss Croyden, I have nothing to scold you for,” I replied, “and I have no bill for damages. To be candid with you, it looks as though I would never make out a bill for anything in this place.”

Caroline looked disconcerted, and exclaimed: “Oh, Mr. Gardner, I am so sorry to find you disappointed in East Looe, but really, I suppose there is nobody here who cares to dispute the authority of the law; but is there nothing else you can do? I observe that you are considerable of an artist.”

As I glanced at a few etchings I had executed during my leisure hours, and hung upon the walls of my office, I carelessly remarked: “Pictures would go a-begging too, I’m afraid.”

“Oh, sir, you make me feel very despondent; but I have a message for you from my grandfather, inviting you to call upon him this evening; may we hope to see you?”

“Thank you; yes, I will be pleased to call.”

“I am so glad, for you haven’t called of late.

And now, sir, I thank you a thousand times for rescuing me from a watery grave. You are so brave that I feel ashamed of my unimportance in the world."

"You have nothing to be ashamed of, Miss Croyden. May I ask if Newton Bramble is still at the mansion?"

"Newton left the day after our marvellous escape, and without making a reasonable apology or expressing regret. Mamma is disappointed in him."

"I am glad of it," I hastily remarked, unable to hide my dislike and the suspicion I had formed concerning the accident.

Caroline looked at me keenly for a moment, and finally remarked: "You don't like my cousin?"

"No, I took an intuitive dislike to him from the date of his introduction," I replied.

"I am sorry," said Caroline. "Are you very busy this afternoon, Mr. Gardner?"

"No, indeed," I responded; "on the contrary, I am simply wondering how to fill in the time."

"Will you accompany me homewards?"

"Most willingly."

We wended our steps towards the mansion.

After we had gone a short distance, Caroline, after some little hesitation, said:

“Mr. Gardner, I trust you will not consider it a liberty if I beg you not to ignore any recognition my grandfather may make to you this evening; we all feel so very much indebted to you that something besides the mere kindly feeling must be displayed, and if it comes in the nature of employment in your legal capacity, you might get to like East Looe. You must not think that I have been instrumental in suggesting anything for your benefit because you rescued me, because I know that no reward could be a substitute for your own happiness in so doing.”

“I shall always like East Looe, Miss Croyden, because your name is associated with it, and I will welcome anything that is likely to extend the opportunity to be near you.”

If Caroline understood the meaning of my little speech she did not betray it, for she made some remark about the beautiful sky, and as quickly turned her eyes to the earth, expatiating on the profusion of flowers which dotted the sward.

I plucked a few flowers and presented them

to her, and she acknowledged the act by bowing and saying they were very pretty.

Reaching the entrance to the lawn, I thanked her for the agreeable change the walk afforded, and returned to my office.

That evening I called at the mansion and was gladly welcomed.

After discussing the accident briefly, Sir Anthony Croyden inquired how I was prospering in my profession.

I answered that my experience had been so unsatisfactory that I contemplated quitting the district as soon as I could discover a desirable place to start over again.

“Ah, my dear boy,” responded the old gentleman, “it is easier to build castles in the air than to realise a hut. I have been thinking upon a plan to keep you out of mischief and to make you satisfied with East Looe. The deep obligation I am under to you in saving my granddaughter’s life demands that I should make an effort in your behalf; therefore I have directed my butler to convey to your office two cases of deeds and other documents appertaining to the Croyden estate, which I want you to make abstracts of so that those who come after me may better under-

stand the nature thereof. I also appoint you my land-agent. A yearly income will be paid to you sufficient for your present needs, and you will be ever welcome here."

I thanked Sir Anthony, and after spending a short time with the ladies, started for my office with a lighter heart than I had carried for many weeks. "Now," thought I, "my castles are materialising."

The following day a cart arrived, and the driver deposited two large tin boxes in my office. I immediately set to work examining their contents.

Many of the deeds were so old that the parchment had broken badly at the folds, and the large wax pendant seals were for similar reasons encased in tin receptacles so that they might not be totally dismembered.

I listed all the deeds, and put the documents in separate files according to their nature; and now I had left an *olla-podrida* of memorandums and letters, some of them yellow with age.

Among these papers I found a package which mystified me. In place of the usual strap used for securing packages, it was fastened with a chain, the ends thereof having

ribbons attached which formed the knot; the papers in this package contained memorandums which appeared to have no reference to Sir Anthony Croyden or to the estates. On the back of an envelope was written in pencil the words, "The person who attacked me is drowned."

After carefully perusing the contents of the package, I laid it in one of the boxes, intending to bring the matter up for elucidation later.

I had now been engaged about two weeks on the contents of the tin boxes, when word was brought to me that Sir Anthony, who had been ailing for some time, was confined to his bed, very ill.

I hastened to the mansion, and conferred with the little doctor who was in attendance; he stated that Sir Anthony's condition was critical, and that the patient was nearing his end.

The old baronet knew that his time was near, and was deeply troubled. At times he would call mournfully, "George, my son, come back to me. Waves, give up your dead." On such occasions it was sad to witness him.

I was present for a short time at the old man's bedside, at his earnest request, and he

looked sadly at me, asking if I thought his son George would come. I pressed his hand, saying, "He may come, Sir Anthony;" but of course I felt that the wish was vain.

Toward the early evening the invalid sank into a slumber, and I left the mansion, promising to return to renew my watch in the evening.

When I returned to the sick man's bedside, I found Catherine and her daughter and the doctor present. The old baronet lay propped up by the pillows, his face wearing a death-like appearance, yet his eyes were eager.

"His mind has been wandering," the doctor stated.

As soon as the old man's anxious eyes detected me, he beckoned me to him with his trembling hand, and cried excitedly, "My son, George, Rags and Bones, Rags——." His voice became inaudible, and his head slid gently down the pillows.

I raised him in my arms, but the poor old baronet's last breath had gone out in the effort of calling Rags and Bones.

CHAPTER VI

A WRIT FROM THE COURT OF CHANCERY

THE funeral obsequies were performed within a few days after Sir Anthony Croyden's death, and his remains were deposited in the family mausoleum, built on a mound overlooking the sea. There was a large attendance of distant relatives, and the entire village turned out to witness the ceremony.

The coffin was taken from the mansion to the church by pallbearers, comprising old men of the village, and from the church to its final resting place.

Among those present was Rags and Bones. He was clothed in a new suit of mourning, and was by far the most conspicuous figure present. He stood bare-headed in such a position that he could see the coffin and the figures of Catherine Croyden and her daughter, who were both closely veiled; but his gaze was riv-

eted on the coffin, and, when at last the iron gate of the mausoleum was closed, and the mourners had departed, he was seen to loiter around the spot. When, later in the day, I strolled to the place, I found Rags and Bones had clambered over the railings, and was seated in front of the locked door. I asked him if he would be good enough to stop at my office on the morrow, that I had a sum of money in trust for him from the dead squire, and his answer came, "I will call to-morrow."

On the following day I was busily engaged in reading the late Sir Anthony Croyden's will, preparatory to getting it engrossed for probate; it was not different from the usual form of wills, saving that there were several codicils.

The estate being entailed, the will contained bequests and disposition of such parts of his personal estate as the testator desired should be given to his relatives, who would not benefit through the entailment, and it was these bequests which I was listing so that Catherine Croyden, who was appointed sole executrix, and to whom most of the personal property was bequeathed, might have no difficulty in comprehending them. Her daughter, Caro-

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line, would eventually come into possession of the estate.

About noon-time I was interrupted by the arrival of Rags and Bones. I read to him that portion of Sir Anthony's will which referred to him, viz., "I give and bequeath unto the character locally known in East Looe as Rags and Bones, the sum of one hundred pounds and a further annuity of sixty pounds, payable monthly, together with the free rent of the cottage which he now occupies as long as he shall live, as a recognition of his bravery in rescuing my daughter, Catherine Croyden, from drowning."

As soon as I had read the bequests to him, Rags and Bones stated that he would take nothing for doing what it was every man's obvious duty to perform. He could not be prevailed upon to continue any conversation, and I soon discovered for the second time that it was a hopeless task to attempt it.

After several days I had engrossed the will for probating, and prepared the necessary affidavits for Catherine Croyden's signature, and had decided to complete the matter without further delay, when my office door was gently opened and Caroline Croyden entered. She had

raised her veil, and her face revealed a troubled look, removed from the natural sorrow attending her grandfather's death. She bade me "Good-morning," took the proffered chair, and then unfolded a piece of paper which she carried in her hand, and placed it before me, saying:

"Mr. Gardner, mamma was called upon this morning by a horrid man, who insisted upon seeing her personally, and who, after reading from a slip of parchment, presented her with this paper, which he stated was a true copy. She can't understand what the Queen wants of her, and has sent me to obtain your solution of it."

One glance was sufficient to show me that it was a writ from the Court of Chancery, issued at the instance of Newton Bramble, he being the son of Sir Anthony Croyden's sister, and the next of kin, provided there was no child from the marriage of George Croyden. I realised that the right of Caroline's succession to the estate of Croyden was to be contested, and by no other a scoundrel than her cousin, Newton Bramble, who had courted her without success, and possibly done something worse in the hope of getting possession of the

estate. Failing in this he had applied to the Court of Chancery.

I looked at the young girl before me, whom I had secretly learnt to love with a desperation beyond that given by those whose love is accepted. I determined then that an important case was at last opened for me, and that I would make the grand effort of my life.

Not wishing to increase Caroline's fears by explaining the nature of the writ, I begged leave to accompany her back to the mansion so that I could explain matters to her mother.

I found Catherine Croyden in the library, and, as she desired that her daughter should know the worst, I explained matters, telling her that as there were but three weeks to prepare a defence, it was expedient for me to go into the matter at once, if she was willing to trust such an important case in my hands.

Catherine Croyden answered, "I know of nobody else who could undertake it so well, and, since you saved my daughter's life, I feel that you are the one who could save her patrimony if it can be saved at all."

I explained how it would be necessary for me to get at some important information only

obtainable through asking her pertinent questions concerning her marriage; and although those questions would revive sorrowful memories, it would be useless to proceed with a brief without it; consequently it was arranged for me to call on the morrow, prepared with a list of questions which I might upon mature consideration deem necessary.

I thereupon left the mansion and proceeded to my office, where I occupied myself until a late hour in framing a list of questions, for it was impossible, with no knowledge of what the plea might be on the part of the claimant, to anticipate the requirements of the defence. It might be possible to procure sufficient evidence in the preliminary trial to quash all further proceedings, or, it was likely, as was usually the case, that the trial would be continued interminably until the estate would be swallowed up in law costs, or the litigants had died.

Caroline appeared at my office on the following morning with a bouquet of flowers as had become her custom since her rescue; it was all I would allow her to do, she said, and I had told her truly that a single flower from her hands was of more value to me than all the

world. Caroline laughed at this statement at the time, and on all subsequent occasions would say, "I have brought a bunch of worlds." On this particular morning, pointing to a beautiful pink rose, she said, "Isn't this a perfect colour, Mr. Gardner?"

"It is like your cheeks, my dear," I replied, and growing suddenly audacious, I bent over and kissed her; at the same moment my heart fluttered within me, and I felt annoyed and ashamed, for I was so much older than Caroline.

Caroline gasped a little, her face became suffused with blushes, and she looked at me intently and curiously, as though doubtful of the propriety of the act.

I felt so mortified that I hardly dared to look at her, but I finally mustered courage to say, "Miss Croyden, I took the liberty of kissing you, because my heart longed to do so. I promise to refrain from doing so again unless your heart is favourable towards it."

Caroline did not reply, but evidently desired to avoid the subject. She stooped and patted my dog, saying, "Brave dog," then arising and walking towards the door, she asked, "Are you ready to go to the mansion?"

Taking the list I had prepared, we left the office and proceeded on our way to the mansion. We talked of the blue sky, the birds and the flowers, and my heart felt a void, for I found how useless it was to think of love.

CHAPTER VII

CATHERINE CROYDEN'S STORY

REACHING the mansion, we entered the library, where Caroline's mother immediately joined us, and after making a few commonplace remarks, requested me to proceed with the business I had in hand.

"The questions will first refer to your marriage," I said, thinking that she might desire her daughter not to be present, but as she made no comment, I continued, "You will excuse me for all inquisitiveness, but the case is so important it is necessary for me to be thoroughly acquainted with all the details of your marriage, and instead of propounding the questions I have prepared, it would be better for you to relate those details as you know them; then if necessary I can question you afterwards."

Catherine Croyden related her story thus:

"I was the only child of the Reverend

Howard Penistan, the rector of this parish. I was educated and brought up entirely under the supervision of my parents, and never having gone far beyond East Looe, nor having the desire to do so, my knowledge of the outside world is limited to the information gathered from books.

“I was acquainted with most of the young girls, in fact I might say, all the inhabitants of the district, although beyond a friendly recognition, I was never in their company for any length of time, my predilections for study making me something of a recluse.

“When I had reached my nineteenth year, George Croyden, only son of Sir Anthony Croyden, returned from college. I had met him on several occasions at church during his previous vacations, but our acquaintance was slight. I was of a retiring disposition, whilst George was always full of life and sunshine; he likewise knew everybody in the village, and chatted with nearly every girl he met. His good nature extended to frequenting a gipsy camp, which annually located in the neighbourhood, but, as I remarked, George was fond of everybody, and I for one have no doubt that his heart was as good as his face.

“Coming in for a share of his attentions, I had no idea that anything more serious was likely to occur, but in course of time George became more devoted; he left off gossiping with the village girls, and made frequent visits to the rectory, and with book in hand he would sit under a tree in the glebe lands. He took tea with us occasionally, and finally I discovered that my heart was in his keeping, although one day I was rudely shaken, for George having neglected his visits to the gipsy camp, was called upon when we were together in the garden, by a buxom gipsy lass, who, without any ceremony; exclaimed:

“George Croyden, are you not coming to visit us again?”

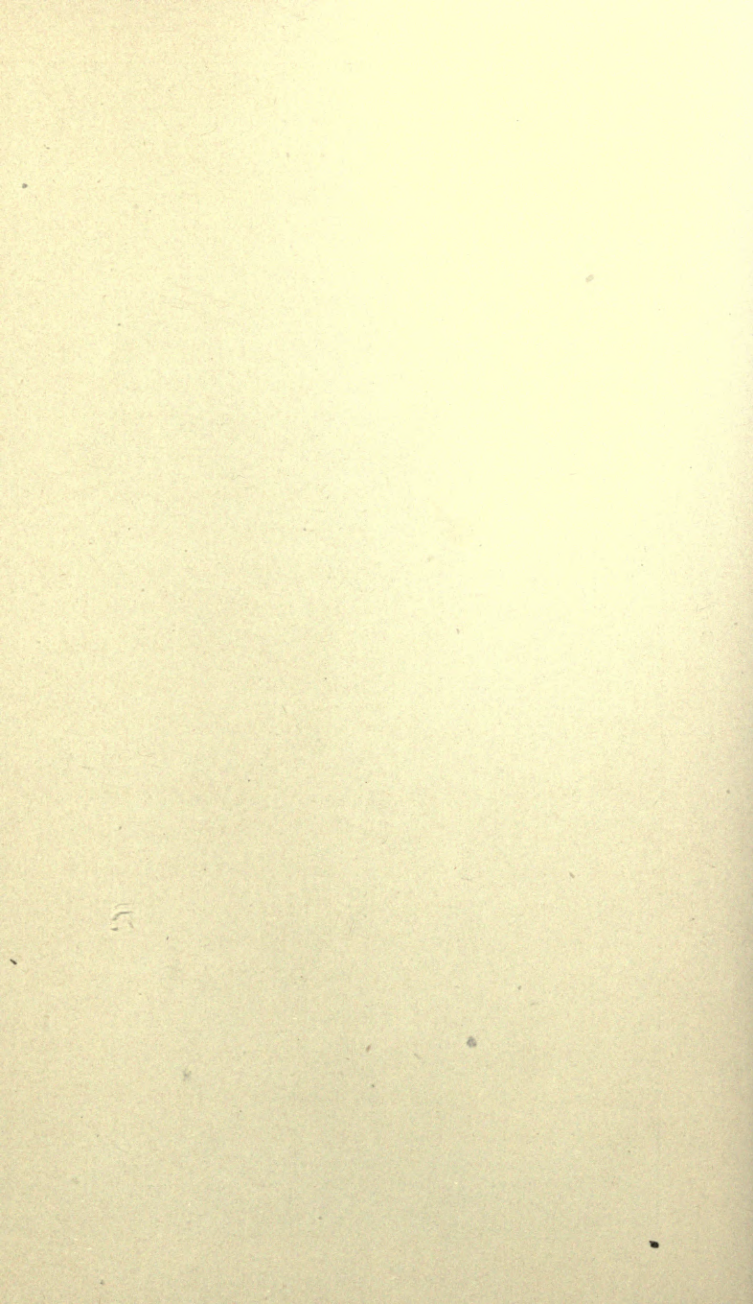
“George was confused beyond the power of speech, but as I started to leave them, recovered himself, and said, ‘Catherine, don’t go. I am innocent of any wrong doing.’ Then turning to the gipsy, asked, ‘Have I done aught that is improper to you?’

“‘No indeed, George,’ the gipsy replied, ‘but I miss your face, it is different from that of our men; and I have a heart as well as this one,’ at the same time pointing at me.

“‘Well,’ answered George, ‘you do me a



“ I have a heart as well as this one ”



great injustice; your visit will be misconstrued, perhaps mar my life; please go home.'

"The gipsy left, muttering something between her teeth, and George, very much humbled, turned to me, and said: 'I suppose I can go home also after this, but I had no idea that my happy disposition towards everybody was going to redound to my discomfiture.'

"I pacified him because I not only believed him, but I loved him too well to cause him unhappiness; but it came nevertheless, and from an unexpected quarter, for Sir Anthony Croyden, on discovering that we were engaged, visited my father, denounced all the ministers alive and dead, and objected to our courtship.

"I tried to persuade George that ours was but a youthful fancy, and that it was best to comply with his father's wish, but he took me in his strong arms and said, 'It is you or nobody'; and after considerable persuasion, the banns were called, and my father reluctantly married us.

"Sir Anthony Croyden, on hearing of the wedding, denied his son the shelter of his roof, despite the pleadings of Lady Croyden, his

wife, so we lived at the rectory. Our lives were peaceful and happy, although George was dejected over the action of his father.

“We lived thus happily together for a period of six months, Lady Croyden driving over frequently to visit us, and to assure us each time of her never-failing devotion, and of her solicitude for our welfare.

“One evening I missed George from the rectory, something that had never happened before since our marriage. I walked around the glebe grounds calling tenderly for him; I went into the churchyard, and finding the church door open, I procured a lantern and entered the old church.

“I ascended the spiral steps leading up into the tower; the belfry ropes dangling through the ceiling cast their shadows upon the floor; ascending another flight, the huge clock ticked heavily away the ever-fleeting time. I looked among the old broken seats deposited in this room, but only disturbed a colony of mice. Ascending to the bell-room, the huge bells hanging from their ponderous supports looked like the bodies of decapitated Amazons, and it being the hour of ten, the clock-bell rang out the hour with such a clangour that it deafened

me, and to this day I have associated its knell with the loss of my husband.

“Another flight brought me to the leads on top of the tower. I gazed around the little village, but it was too dark to discern any form of life. I could hear the soughing of the waves as they swept the sandy beach. I waved my lantern, in the hope that my husband might be attracted by it and come home to me.

“I started to descend, and becoming nervous at the lonesomeness of the spot; I sped down the spiral steps regardless of my footing, many steps at a time. The bells seemed to be clanging together, and their resonance ran off into weird noises as though tossed about by the wind. The big clock ticked right up against the entrance as I passed, instead of against the opposite wall, and as I rushed by the belfry the ropes seemed to be rattling through the holes in the ceiling, and dancing on the floor; as when they are pulled by the ringers.

“I reached the ground floor, where many a drowned sailor had been temporarily deposited to await final identification and burial. I had often witnessed those unhappy scenes, and they were all crowded into my senses that night. I

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stood still with fright, peering into the darkness beyond the meagre light shed by the lantern; I heard sounds like drops of water falling upon the granite floor; were they footsteps? I wondered. Finally I thought of George, and recovering my equanimity I walked boldly through the aisles, and over the vaults which contained the bones of many a forgotten knight. Reaching the pulpit, I passed by the niches which contained the rusty armour of knights who had fought during the holy crusade; they appeared to be in motion, and the knights seemed to inhabit them again and frown upon me; yes, I was not mistaken, for on passing by one niche, whose rusty deposit had been secured by a cord to hold its broken joints together, it fell with such a crash that its echo resounded with a metallic sound through the old gothic arches and over the hollow vaults, losing itself among the bells in the tower. One of the jointed hands bounded to my feet as though to lay hold of me; I dropped the lantern in my fright and screamed and screamed again, until the awful echoes mocking me, silenced me. I picked up the lantern and flew into the vestry room, and the night-air rustled the leaves of an open book

upon the table; I looked up and saw that the window was badly broken. I examined the book; it was the register of marriages, and it was open at the page corresponding to the date of our marriage, and a leaf had been abstracted.

“ I, in some manner, connected the sacrilege with my husband’s disappearance. I immediately dismissed my fright, and started to leave the church, when a bat, attracted by the light, entered the broken window and flickered around the lantern and in my face. Forgetting the fallen armour, I fell over it, and the lantern flew out of my hand, crashed upon the stone floor, and became extinguished. I was in total darkness. I tried to extricate myself from the armour, but it became so entangled in my skirts that I no sooner released one part than another became fastened, and my fright returned, for it seemed as though one of the old knights was holding me back; I tried to discern it in the darkness, but golden rings would form before my eyes and flicker out. Finally I rushed along dragging what adhered to me, and it clanged along the floor until I reached the churchyard, where I sank down half dead with fright.

“Again the thought of my missing husband revived me, and dragging off the entangled armour by main force, I ran to the mansion.

“Arriving thither I plied the huge knocker so vigorously that the dogs howled with alarm, and after waiting for what seemed an interminable time, Sir Anthony Croyden put his head out of a window and interrogated me.

“I screamed in reply, ‘Father, my dear husband has been missing all night.’

“I was weakened with fright and worry over my lost husband, and I fainted, for the next thing I remember was discovering Lady Croyden’s arms around me, and saying, ‘My poor, dear girl, how could you treat her so; I will certainly leave you, Anthony, if you don’t relent towards her.’

“‘My poor George!’ cried Sir Anthony, ‘I intended forgiving him, and bringing him back.’ Then turning to the butler who was present, he said: ‘Arouse the servants and begin a search along the shore. I will go with you.’

“I remained at the mansion until the morning had fairly dawned, when I started towards the cliffs to join the searchers. On the way I

espied a female approaching, and as soon as she came near I recognised Madge Morrill, the gipsy girl; and without giving me a moment's preparation, she shouted: 'George is drowned!'

"I clasped my hands to my heart and shrieked 'Murder!' I rushed to the cliff's with the speed of the wind; without realising the danger I slid down the precipice, striking on the Black Rock, from whence I rolled into the sea.

"I was observed by the searchers on the beach, and was rescued, but being unconscious I knew not of it until afterwards.

"I was taken for dead to the rectory, where I was confined to my bed for several weeks with a raging fever. When I recovered sufficiently to bear the ill news, I learnt that the body of an unknown man had been found on the beach, and sufficient evidence to indicate that my dear husband had been drowned, but his body was never discovered.

"The birth of my daughter, some time afterwards, assisted me in supporting my deep sorrow, but I never felt satisfied concerning my dear George's death.

"George's parents grieved very greatly over

their son's loss, and became greatly attached to my daughter, but Lady Croyden did not long survive the shock.

"After the death of his wife, Sir Anthony pleaded so strongly that we come to the mansion to cheer his declining years, particularly as my daughter would eventually come into possession of the estate, that finally, coupled by my father's persuasion, I came hither, and we have been comparatively happy up to the present time, when there is another occasion for sorrow, and a Chancery suit gives rise for fear.

"You now know all," Catherine Croyden said in conclusion.

"Not all," I answered. "Have you the marriage certificate?"

"No," she replied, "I omitted to state that the page taken from the register in the vestry room contained the certificate of our marriage."

"Oh! dear me!" I incontinently uttered.

Catherine Croyden's story was graphic enough, and I had no occasion, as far as I could see, to ask but this one question concerning her marriage certificate.

Her answer perturbed me, for I could see

nothing but difficulty in the way of proving Caroline's title.

The matter was so important that I thanked her, and expressed my intention of retiring to my office at once, to prepare a brief, but I was persuaded to remain for lunch, after which I was ensconced in my office.

CHAPTER VIII

BEFORE THE TRIAL

I PONDERED over Catherine Croyden's story for several hours before I resolved upon a plan of action.

The facts concerning her marriage, as related by herself, were so evident, that a jury would hardly question its veracity; then too the marriage had finally been recognized by Sir Anthony Croyden, but this important witness was dead.

It seemed absolutely necessary, in order to prove the title to the estate, that the marriage certificate should be produced; even Catherine Croyden's word would go no further than that of any other sworn witness, in the high Court of Chancery.

I finally stepped over to the church and entered the vestry room. The marriage register was kept in an unlocked chest. I turned back to the date of George Croyden's marriage, and discovered that the then officiating

rector, Catherine Croyden's father, had made a note on the page immediately opposite the missing one as follows:

"On March 10, 1849, the vestry window was discovered broken, and the register, usually kept in an oak chest, was found opened on the table in the vestry room, with page No. 73 abstracted therefrom; this page contained the certificate of marriage of George Croyden with Catherine Penistan, dated September 14, 1848; and was solemnised by the undersigned.

"HOWARD PENISTAN, *Rector*.

"And the witnesses to the marriage were

"HANNAH PENISTAN, wife of HOWARD PENISTAN.

"JOHN POLLOCK, *Clerk*.

"Who have subscribed their names hereto.

"On the morning following this discovery, the body of a well-clothed man, a stranger, was found on the beach east of the Black Rock; he had, to all appearance, died after reaching the shore.

"Papers found on the body indicated his connection with the robbery, but the certificate was not recovered.

"This record is made to substantiate the marriage, in case proof thereof should ever become necessary.

"Signed, HOWARD PENISTAN, *Rector*."

The Reverend Howard Penistan, and both the subscribing witnesses, were dead, and al-

though the memorandum on the register in the rector's own hand-writing might influence the jury, still the prosecution could, and very likely would, object to its introduction.

I resolved, however, to obtain my father's permission to take the register along as an exhibit on the day of trial.

I removed the deeds and other documents relating to the estate from my office to the rectory, as the safest place until the suit was decided.

There was nothing further that I could do but to think and plan until the day of trial.

After another perusal, I discovered that the file of nondescript papers which I had discovered among the deeds contained mystifications, which with a proper key might be unravelled, but Sir Anthony Croyden was probably the only person who could throw any light on the subject; on appealing to Catherine Croyden she knew nothing whatever about them. I could not see wherein they applied to the estate, and yet there was something about them which constantly recurred to my thoughts.

I had visited the mansion daily for a short time, at Catherine Croyden's request, but little

was done or could be accomplished beyond what I had decided upon at first.

The days had slipped by very swiftly. Caroline had called daily with a fresh bouquet of flowers, and each time she produced the nosegay she would comment with a serious countenance, as if she were afraid I might forget my promise, "You paid for all these."

I looked at it as a rebuke and felt uncomfortable.

We were now within four days of the trial, and I had arranged with Catherine Croyden to accompany her and her daughter to London on the morrow, so that arrangements could be made for their accommodation, and also that I might have ample time to prepare for the trial.

I had put the papers in my satchel with the register of marriages, and sat back in my chair in contemplation, when the door opened, and Rags and Bones appeared; he came forward and shook hands, after which he sat down.

Looking at me intently for a moment, he said: "Some time ago you were appointed the medium by which I was to receive a certain sum of money. Does that still remain in force?"

I replied, "Upon your refusal to accept the

bequest, the amount was returned to Catherine Croyden, but I am sure there will be no difficulty in obtaining it from her."

"I have no such desire," said Rags and Bones, "I simply wanted to—well, never mind now." Then placing his hand to his forehead, he arose to go.

"My dear sir," I said, "don't hesitate in a matter wherein you would be doing a kindness to Mistress Croyden by accepting an acknowledgment in return for saving her life; it was only a few days ago that she referred to the matter as very incomprehensible that a man in apparently moderate circumstances should decline the offer, but she decided that you are more of a nobleman than the surface indicated."

Rags and Bones shook his head "Not now, I cannot," he answered.

I followed him to the door, offering my services in any way he desired, but he left me unanswered.

Rags and Bones had no sooner left the office than two ragged urchins, who were tugging at a dilapidated crab-pot full of bones, called out, "Mister, what'll ye give for these bones? say Rags, what'll ye——"

Upon this the object of their attention turned around, gazed at the bones in a meditative way, and gave the boys a silver bit, on receiving which they decamped at full speed; and Rags and Bones, after satisfying himself on whatever point the bones had prompted him, went on his way in the direction of the mansion.

Thinking he was not prepared to take his purchase, I dragged the crab-pot with its contents into my office, so that they would be safe on his return; they were well picked bones, and my dog after sniffing around the basket, resumed his nap on the mat with an injured air.

Shortly afterwards I had another visitor in Caroline Croyden. She had never appeared before without a bouquet, and as she entered, her face wore a saddened expression.

“Oh! Mr. Gardner!” she said instantly on entering, “I am afraid my entire ignorance of the proprieties has made me appear ridiculous. I was on my way hither with a message from mamma, that everything was in readiness for the journey, when I met Rags and Bones outside the gate. He tried to avoid me, poor man, and attributing it to his poverty, I made

bold to call out to him as sweetly as the words would admit of, 'Rags and Bones.' He instantly stopped, and gazed upon me with such a surprised look, that I said, 'I hope, sir, that I am not too bold in addressing you in such a manner, but neither my mother nor Mr. Gardner have succeeded in discovering any other name; it is of course meaningless saving as a means of attracting you.'

"He replied, 'My dear young lady, I owned a different name once, but through untoward circumstances—some call it fate—I have adopted the profession of a rags and bones collector, and the name of my calling is quite good enough for me.'

"'But, sir,' I replied, 'my grandfather, Sir Anthony Croyden, directed before his death, and my mother only recently begged Mr. Gardner to try to influence you to accept some suitable employment on the estate, and it grieves my mother very much to be informed that you will receive no recognition at her hands.'

"He answered, 'I mean no discourtesy to your mother, nor to you, young lady; some day I may be permitted to explain, but the time is not yet.'

“Something prompted me to offer him the flowers I intended for you; he accepted them with a bow, and crushed them with both hands violently against his bosom, and I thought I heard him sobbing as he walked away; he is certainly a strange man. And so you see, Mr. Gardner, you are minus a fresh bunch of worlds to-day; and that reminds me that in our daily visits to the mausoleum, we always find fresh bunches of flowers laid on both grand-mamma’s and grandpapa’s tombs. Sometimes they are wild flowers such as grow scattered o’er field and fen, at other times they are the cultivated varieties; we wonder who is so fond of their memories.”

At that moment Caroline espied the basket of bones, and remarked: “Have you gotten in a supply of bones for Dash during our absence?”

I explained to her that they were a recent purchase by Rags and Bones.

“Isn’t it strange?” she remarked. “It is cruel to pass remarks, but I wonder if he is exactly right? He does not act nor talk like an ordinary man.”

I answered, “It’s a conundrum, and I’ll give it up, for the present, at least.”

Nothing further transpired until we reached London, and having seen to the proper accommodation of my charges, I went to the room I occupied during my examination days, and again gave myself up to thinking over the coming trial.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIAL

AT last the day for the trial arrived. I had ascertained that the case was among the earliest on the docket, and I escorted my fair clients early to the Courtroom in Chancery Lane, so that they could escape the vulgar gaze of the crowd, which from time immemorial has found the Court of Chancery the chief spot to gratify its morbid curiosity. There are visitors to the Chancery Court who have no connection with it as far as the cases are concerned, but who nevertheless are as regular in attendance as the judges.

The Chancery Court is a musty place, and after experiencing the sea breezes of East Looe, the comparison was anything but favourable. The room looked part chapel, part theatre, but without anything foreshadowed to warrant the anticipation of pleasure.

Catherine Croyden sat very demurely beside her daughter, frequently using a bottle of smelling salts; she had never been absent from East Looe in her life before, and as she related after the trial, she never wanted to leave it again during the balance of her life. She was nervous, not knowing whom she was to confront, nor what questions would be propounded, and I was unable to encourage her.

As the hour of ten drew near the room became densely crowded. Several attorneys had assembled around a large table immediately in front of the judgment seat, and among a group of the latter sat Newton Bramble, Caroline's cousin, the one concerned in the boating accident, and who was the claimant to the estate of Croyden.

Caroline watched him for a moment and remarked to me that if he succeeded in upsetting her title to the estate as easily as he did the boat, it would not take long to decide the case.

"Do you mean that?" I asked.

"I have thought so since the case was instituted," Caroline replied.

"I wish you had hinted at it before," I com-

mented, "as I might have made a case out of it; I thought so all along."

The cathedral clocks in the neighbourhood were striking ten, and precisely at that hour the Chancery judge appeared; the audience arose, the judge bowed to the exploiters of the law, and sat down in a high-backed chair, which was surmounted by the lion and unicorn upholding a crown.

The chaplain offered a prayer to Him who made the hearts of all men, to bless her Gracious Majesty, the Queen, and to imbue her judges with wisdom to administer the laws of her realms so that the right might prevail, and peace and happiness abound.

Then the court crier opened the proceedings of the day with the antiquated phrase, "Oyez, Oyez, her Majesty's Court of Chancery is now open, those having business before the Court will hold themselves in readiness to answer when called upon, the others are commanded to keep silence."

The judge, arrayed in his powdered wig and ermine gown, was sufficiently imposing to awe any person unfamiliar with the *modus operandi* of the law, and Catherine Croyden visibly shook.

The first case called was postponed till the next sitting, owing to the death of one of the litigants.

The second case was “Newton Bramble *versus* Catherine Croyden, and Caroline Croyden, a minor.”

Immediately one of the trio of attorneys surrounding the claimant arose, and stated that the firm of Hunt, Ketchem & Pluck represented the claimant.

Requesting Catherine Croyden to remain seated, I stepped forward to within easy speaking distance of the judge, and in a sonorous voice, stated, “I, Edmund Keith Gardner, have the honour to represent the real owner.”

Mr. Hunt, who appeared to be the harrier of the firm, objected to the words “real owner” being used, on the ground that it would imply an acknowledgment which they did not for a moment propose to grant.

The judge addressed me, saying, “Will you change the sentence?” Bowing, I said, “I, Edmund Keith Gardner, have the great honour of representing the defendant.”

“We object to the word defendant,” said Mr. Hunt.

I looked at the judge, who nodded, evidently

supposing that I had made a blunder. I thereupon said, "I insist upon using the word defendant, inasmuch as Catherine Croyden, the lawful widow of George Croyden, is the rightful owner until her daughter becomes of age."

Mr. Hunt protested that recognising Catherine Croyden as the lawful widow of George Croyden, and therefore the rightful owner, were exactly the points at issue, and insisted that this sentence be entirely expunged.

Without answering my opponent, I turned to the judge and said: "Your Worship, as attorney for Catherine Croyden I take the stand, as upon thorough investigation I have found it, that being the possessor she is the rightful owner until proved otherwise."

The judge replied, "The mere statement made at the beginning of this trial that Catherine Croyden is, or combined with her daughter, are defendant or defendants, or that they are the rightful owner or owners, does not prevent the claimant from disproving it. It appears to me that it is the duty of the defence to cling to his statement, until the court decides the case."

My opponent then asked, "Has Mr. Gard-

ner produced his credentials as a lawyer able to plead in this court? ”

I thereupon handed my certificate to the judge, who, after examining it, returned it with a bow.

“ But how are we to know that he is the person named in the certificate? ” asked Mr. Hunt.

“ You will have ample opportunity to disprove that also,” I retorted.

The trio of lawyers then held a consultation together, and Mr. Hunt sat down, and Mr. Ketchem acted as interrogator.

“ Your worship,” said Mr. Ketchem, “ Sir Anthony Croyden having recently died without leaving living issue, we claim that our client, Newton Bramble, is next of kin, there being no authentic proof that George Croyden was married according to law.”

“ Does your case rest with this statement? ” asked the judge.

“ We have no means of making further claims until the case proceeds,” answered Mr. Ketchem.

“ In other words,” said the judge, “ you let the burden of your case rest on the defendant to prove a marriage.”

“To prove the marriage,” said the attorney.

“I thank you for your lesson in grammar,” retorted the judge.

“Mr. Gardner,” continued his Worship, “will you act upon the suggestion given?”

“Do I understand, your Worship, that the claimant’s attorneys are awaiting an opportunity to make a case out of any weakness they may discover in my pleading?”

“That would be the inevitable in any case,” replied his Worship. “It remains for you to prove your client’s title to the estate in such a way as will baffle the opposite party.”

I replied, “It appears, your Worship, that a case has been trumped up against two defenceless women, in the hope that they will fail in producing sufficient evidence. There is a mystery attached to the case which needs explaining before the matter of proof can be gone into, and seeing that the claimant has not been put on the stand, and that his attorneys have made no assertions, I take for granted that it means a tilt between lawyers to make a discovery on the one side, or to prevent it on the other side; if I have not fully expressed myself, I mean that I also can introduce my case without having my client called to the stand.”

At this juncture Mr. Ketchem interrupted, saying that he insisted upon calling the defendants to the stand.

“Now or later?” I demanded.

At this point the trio of lawyers again held a consultation together, and Mr. Ketchem answered, “We will have Catherine Croyden on the stand at this time.”

I remonstrated: “Your Worship, the lawyers for the claimant have already rested the burden of their case on me to prove my client’s title to the estate; I would like to know if this honourable court recognises their right to re-open their case every time they discover a salient point.”

“We would like to ask Catherine Croyden a few questions,” interposed Mr. Ketchem.

“Your Worship, before I permit my client to be questioned and cross-questioned, I insist that the claimant be placed on the stand and duly sworn, so that I may renew the doubtful pleasure of feeling his pulse.”

“Have you met the claimant before?” inquired the judge.

“We met before this trial was instituted, or perhaps thought of. The claimant visited East Looe ostensibly to make a friendly call

upon his cousin, Caroline Croyden. His visit ended very abruptly, and in a manner that, coupled with the present suit, indicates it was for no other purpose than to wrest the estate of Croyden by foul means; for had he obtained the hand of Caroline Croyden, which he had first in view, it would have been as baneful as his subsequent act, which left no doubt as to his criminal intentions; there are a few incidents in connection with his visit that I would like him to elucidate."

"We object to our client being catechised on any matter not appertaining to the case," said Mr. Ketchem.

"Bring the—bring him forward," I demanded, forgetting for a moment that I was in court.

Newton Bramble came forward in a shuffling manner, and the oath was administered.

I then addressed him, saying: "Newton Bramble, did you ever see Miss Caroline Croyden before you visited her at East Looe some few months ago?"

"Never before," he answered.

"Why did you visit her on that occasion?"

"To make her acquaintance."

"Had you no other object?"

"I object to the question," said Mr. Ketchem.

"What is your objection?" asked the judge.

"The question leads to the inference that there was another object beyond that stated," answered Mr. Ketchem.

"I think the question is perfectly relevant," said his Worship; "go on, Mr. Gardner."

"Had you no other object?" I repeated.

"No definite object," was the answer, given in a surly manner.

"Did you ever have any experience in sailing a boat before your visit to East Looe?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever sail a boat off the coast, before you visited East Looe?"

"Yes."

"State where."

"In the neighbourhood of Plymouth."

"Do you consider yourself expert in handling a sail-boat at sea?"

"Yes."

"Can you explain why, on a calm day like that in which you took the defendant and her daughter in a sail-boat off East Looe, the boat capsized?"

The witness coloured deeply, and for a few

moments could think of no answer; finally he said: "The only answer I can make is that the boat capsized."

"Do you consider yourself an expert swimmer?"

"Reasonably expert."

"When the boat was capsized and the two ladies thrown into the sea, how comes it that when I swam to their rescue, you were clinging to the boat without offering assistance?"

"I didn't consider myself expert swimmer enough."

"After the ladies were rescued, you swam to shore lively enough," I observed.

"How comes it that you left East Looe the day following the episode, without making an apology, or even saying good-bye to those who welcomed your visit?"

"That is my affair," he answered.

"Who prompted you to institute this suit?"

Here the trio of lawyers jumped to their feet and objected to their client being questioned on this point.

"I think, Mr. Gardner," said his Worship, "that you need not press for an answer."

"Mr. Bramble, I sincerely hope that the thorns you have started on your youthful vine

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to menace others, will meet with an obstacle sufficient to turn the points towards your own body; I have done with you for the present."

Then Mr. Ketchem said: "I ask that Catherine Croyden be called to the witness box and sworn."

I stepped over to Catherine Croyden and led her to the stand, advising her to answer just the questions propounded, unless I objected thereto. Caroline stood by her side to encourage her. A clerk handed her a Testament, saying in one breath and without changing the tone of his voice: "Take off your glove take the book in your right hand the evidence you shall give before the court shall be the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you Gad kiss the book."

"How many times have you been married?" asked Mr. Ketchem.

"Once only."

"Relate the incidents leading up to your alleged marriage."

I interposed an objection.

"Objection sustained," said the judge.

"At what time did your alleged marriage with George Croyden take place?"

"On September 14, 1848."

"Did your parents object to the alleged marriage?"

"My father was the rector of East Looe, and married us."

"How old were you at the time of the alleged marriage?"

"Nineteen years."

"What was the duration of your courtship?"

I interposed an objection.

"Objection sustained," said the judge.

At this point the lawyers held a few moments' conversation together, and examined a paper.

"Did you live happily together during your alleged married life?"

"Oh, very happy; happier than all the world."

"Did your alleged husband's father object to the marriage?"

I interposed an objection that, the marriage having been consummated, the father's objection would not change its validity, George Croyden being of age.

The judge overruled my objection on the ground that subsequent revelations might be affected by the answer.

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Catherine Croyden thereupon answered, "Sir Anthony Croyden objected to our marriage at first, but became reconciled to me after—after my husband became lost to me;" and at this point she burst into tears.

"Was there any offspring from that alleged marriage?"

"A daughter," was the answer.

"What was the date of that daughter's birth?"

I objected to the question as irrelevant.

"State your objection," said the judge.

"Your Worship, as I stated at the opening of this case, there is a mystery attached to it which, unexplained, leaves all answers without their true significance; the answer to this question announces a fact without giving an opportunity to explain the causes leading up to it."

Mr. Ketchem insisted upon the question being answered.

I appealed to the court, arguing that answering the question at this time would materially destroy the evidence which would be subsequently adduced.

The judge thereupon allowed the question to remain in *statu quo*, until I should later revert to it.

The lawyers again consulted, and requested that Caroline Croyden be put on the stand.

The clerk was about to pass the Testament and repeat his monotonous dirge, when the judge leaned forward and said it was unnecessary.

“What is your name?” asked Mr. Ketchem.

“Caroline Croyden.”

“And your age?”

“Eighteen years.”

“What date is your birthday?”

I objected to this stealthy way of obtruding a question which had been relegated to the rear.

“Your Worship,” said Mr. Ketchem, “asking one witness a question and being temporarily overruled, does not preclude us from asking another witness the same question.”

“It evidently does not deter you from doing so,” replied his Worship; “you are overruled.”

After consulting his partners again, Mr. Ketchem put the question:

“Have you a suitor?”

I held up my hand to Caroline to prevent her from answering, and objected to the question.

“How long have you been engaged?”

I again objected.

The judge then addressed Mr. Ketchem, saying, "The question has no bearing in this case, but I sincerely hope that Miss Croyden has a suitor who is worthy of her, and who will faithfully guide and protect her."

Mr. Ketchem thereupon commented, "We have finished for the present."

Turning to me the judge said, "Now, Mr. Gardner, you can proceed with your case."

"Your Worship, before I was interrupted, I began by stating there was a mystery attached to this case which it was necessary to explain for its general elucidation. Being a comparative stranger to all connected with the case, and even to East Looe until very recently, it was necessary for me to unravel it; and as many of the actors have left the stage, are dead in fact, the difficulty has been very considerable.

"The cardinal points, and the only ones which can interest the court, are these:

"George Croyden, the only son and heir of the late Sir Anthony Croyden, was married to Catherine Penistan, only daughter of the Reverend Howard Penistan, rector of East Looe, on September 14, 1848. The ceremony was performed by the rector.

"Sir Anthony Croyden objected to the mar-



“A page had been abstracted from the register of marriages”

riage, on the ground that it was a departure from the example set by his ancestors, to marry outside of the baronetcy; but he relented after the loss of his son.

“The couple lived very happily together at the rectory for about seven months, when one night George Croyden was missed. His wife searched the glebe lands and the churchyard, finally entering the church in quest of him. Reaching the vestry room, she discovered that the window had been broken, and that a page had been abstracted from the register of marriages, which lay open on the vestry table, instead of being in its accustomed place in an oaken chest.

“Being alarmed for the safety of her husband, she then went to the mansion and awoke Sir Anthony Croyden; and he, with a body of servants, started for the shore in search of his son.

“Catherine Croyden became unconscious from the efforts of her fruitless search, but on recovering also started for the shore, and on her way was met by a gipsy wench named Madge Morrill, who, without any modification of words, informed her that her husband was drowned.

“Worried beyond her power to control, Catherine Croyden ran to the edge of the cliff overlooking the beach, and slid down its almost precipitous sides, striking the Black Rock, a huge boulder immediately below the cliff, and rolled into the sea, from which she was rescued and taken unconscious to the rectory, where she was confined to her bed for several weeks with a fever.

“The body of George Croyden, supposed to have been drowned, was never found, but the body of a well-dressed man, a stranger, was discovered on the beach, and from memorandums found upon him, he had evidently lived a short time after having reached the shore. These memorandums are important as bearing in an indirect way on the theft of the leaf from the marriage register. The certificate was never recovered.

“The parish register, which I now produce, has a memorandum opposite to the page succeeding the missing one, in the handwriting of the rector who officiated at the wedding, setting forth the facts of the marriage and the theft of the certificate.”

I then passed the register to the judge who scrutinised it very carefully.

"Do you rest your case upon this exhibit?" asked the judge.

"I have no alternative but to do so," I replied.

Mr. Ketchem then arose, and stated that the mere fact of a memorandum having been made on the register, of an alleged marriage, was not proof that a marriage had taken place, as the signatures of the parties to the marriage were not subscribed.

"But the signatures of the witnesses are," I replied.

"How are we to get the proof of that?" asked Mr. Ketchem.

"On Catherine Croyden's oath," I answered.

At this point the judge addressed himself to the claimant saying: "Do we understand that you refuse to take the defendant's word under oath, that she was legally married to George Croyden?"

The claimant looked at his lawyers, hesitated for a moment, then replied that he preferred to accept the legal version of the matter.

His Worship then turned to me and said:

"I am perfectly satisfied as to the validity

of George Croyden's marriage with Catherine Penistan, I never had a doubt of it from the beginning; but unfortunately, in order to satisfy the claimant,—who will not acknowledge his belief in it,—and the law itself,—which you are aware cannot be modified to suit the case,—it is necessary,—seeing that the witnesses are dead,—that the certificate be produced, or that further evidence other than that presented by Catherine Croyden be procured; and an application for further time to enable you to obtain such evidence will be granted upon application.”

I was about to make that application, when there was a commotion in the court room, and Rags and Bones, who had evidently been present during the entire proceedings, forced himself up to the witness stand. His face was pale and haggard, and his hand trembled as he drew a paper from his bosom and passed it to me saying: “Please examine that document.”

I took the paper, and opened before my astonished gaze the missing page from the register.

I then addressed the judge, stating that through a marvellous interposition of Provi-

dence, the stolen certificate had been recovered, and I passed him the leaf.

Rags and Bones having handed me the certificate, proceeded to leave the dock, when the judge exclaimed: "Stop that man!" He thereupon stood in the witness box, with downcast eyes.

The judge asked for the register of marriages, and fitting the leaf in the book at the mutilated page, was evidently engrossed in comparing the writing; then he stated, "The certificate is, without the shadow of a doubt, the original one, and confirms Catherine Croyden's statement, and her title to the estate;" then passing the book back to me, he addressed himself to the claimant, saying gruffly: "I desire that you examine the certificate."

The register with the certificate having been passed to Newton Bramble, he reluctantly glanced over it; then gazed blankly at his attorneys, who were no less chagrined.

"Have you anything to say why this case should not be decided against your client, and in favour of Catherine Croyden?" asked the judge.

"We would like to ask this fellow a few questions under oath," said Mr. Ketchem.

I objected on the ground that the certificate of marriage having been produced, annulled the claimant's suit, and as far as this case was concerned, it was at an end.

"I sustain your objection," said the judge, "but the propounding and answering of certain questions may clear up a mystery, which, unsolved, might leave room for future suits."

Hereupon the clerk went through the process of administering the oath.

"How came you in possession of that certificate?" asked Mr. Ketchem.

"I took it from the original thief," Rags and Bones replied.

"At what time and place?"

"On the night of the sacrilege, and at East Looe."

"Where have you been since that time?"

"Abroad."

"And your name?"

"Rags and Bones."

"That may be your calling, but we want the name you owned at the time of the robbery."

"It matters not, the world is dead to me," Rags and Bones replied.

At this stage the judge interposed, saying to the witness: "It is necessary for the purpose

of settling this case for all time, that the mystery connected with the marriage certificate be entirely cleared up; give thy name, man!"

With a sorrowful voice, Rags and Bones replied, "I am George Croyden, the missing heir to the estate of Croyden."

"George Croyden!" I excitedly exclaimed.

Catherine Croyden, who had not taken her eyes off the witness from the time he produced the certificate, no sooner heard him aver that he was the lost heir, than she stretched out her arms and arose to go to him; but the strain had been too much for her, and before she reached him she turned deadly pale, fell to the floor, and was taken unconscious into an anteroom.

Order was restored in the court room, and the judge summed up the verdict in a very few words, that the case was quashed by the presence of the lost heir, and further, that had the certificate been produced in any other manner, the verdict would have been the same.

The audience was so overjoyed at the result of the case that a distinct applause was given, and the gavel was rapped to restore order.

No sooner had order been restored than the lawyers for the claimant demanded George Croyden's arrest on the charge of murder.

“Are you sure that you are warranted in making such a serious charge?” inquired the judge.

“We have good and sufficient reasons for so doing,” answered Mr. Hunt.

“Well,” replied the judge, “I trust there will be sufficient proof to the contrary. The manner in which you instituted and conducted the present case gives good and sufficient reason for denying the warrant unless reasonable proof is adduced beforehand, and I direct that George Croyden be allowed his freedom whilst under this roof; if you insist upon his arrest, you must seek a warrant elsewhere.”

CHAPTER X

ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT

AS soon as the court had rendered its verdict, I asked George Croyden to visit his wife in the anteroom, but he answered: "I cannot; the time is not yet."

"But you will certainly be arrested on the serious charge of murder, and it may be a long time before you get the opportunity again."

"I cannot see her at this time," was his reply.

Then I asked him what he intended doing, and he replied, "I am going back to East Looe."

When he started to leave the court room I knew it was useless to advise him, so I followed more for the sake of seeing what would become of him than for any good I might be able to do.

He had no sooner reached the street than

two officers, instructed by the lawyers, took hold of him and handcuffing him, led him away.

In this proceeding I did not interfere, for in such a serious charge, warrant or no warrant, any obstruction from outsiders would result in reprisals of a not very salutary nature. I contented myself, therefore, by mingling with the crowd, and following George Croyden to the criminal court at the Old Bailey, where a warrant was sworn out in the names of Hunt, Ketchem & Pluck, on behalf of the commonwealth, against George Croyden, alias Rags and Bones, for the murder of one Edward Marshall at East Looe on or about the tenth day of March, 1849.

George Croyden was at once committed to prison, bail being refused. I persuaded him to appoint me his attorney, and I obtained a permit from the committing magistrate to visit the prisoner as his legal adviser, and at such times as the prison rules permitted.

I then returned to the Chancery Court and found the court proceedings adjourned for the day, the judge being present with Catherine Croyden and Caroline, speaking words of comfort. He assured Catherine that courage

and determination on her part were necessary in the present trouble, more than in the case just ended so favourably, in order that all possible evidence might be secured.

The judge took my hand and said, "I would like to see more of you; the Chancery Court needs enlightenment, but it will never be obtainable from the darkened characters who make a business of cheating the law and the gospel in it."

We finally left the court room, and informing Catherine Croyden as gently as could be conveyed by words of the arrest and imprisonment of her husband, and also of the utter impossibility of her visiting him at this time, we hastily journeyed back to East Looe.

Catherine Croyden was in a deplorable state of mind, for the discovery of her husband, and his subsequent arrest on the charge of murder, had so shocked her that it seemed impossible for me to get her to discuss the matter.

To all my questions she would answer, "I know nothing whatever; my husband has been dead to me these eighteen years, and now that he has reappeared it is to be cast into prison as a murderer. Would I had died the day he

first became lost to me, then I would have been saved all these years of sorrow."

"Have a little more fortitude, I beg of you, Mistress Croyden," I said. "It is necessary that I, almost an entire stranger, should have your assistance in unravelling the case."

I shut myself in my office for two whole days with a sketch of Catherine Croyden's story before me. I made drawings of the cliffs and the cove, but this did not help me; everything that happened that dark night was wrapped in mystery, and the return of George Croyden made it more mysterious and cloaked him with grave suspicion of guilt; and here, unfortunately, I confounded his disguise of Rags and Bones, together with his refusal to see his wife after so long a separation, as an admission of his guilt, and it retarded me from devoting myself with that keen interest in the case that a freedom from these impressions would otherwise have stimulated.

I had started in on the third day with the intention of taking a trip back to London to consult the prisoner as the only means of obtaining adequate information to begin my plea, when I was interrupted by the appearance of Caroline with a bunch of worlds, as

she still persisted in calling the roses. She bade me good-morning, and after removing the faded worlds that had remained since the day we started for London, she put the fresh bunch in the vase.

“Mr. Gardner, I have grown suddenly old,” she said.

“I hope not, Miss Croyden,” I replied, “for I want you, above all persons, to remain forever young, in heart at least.”

“Unless I die young, that can never be!” Caroline replied.

“Why not?” I inquired.

“Because there is too much trouble in this poor old world,” she answered.

“Ah, my dear,” I said, “it is these troubles that make us so much better.”

“Perhaps you are right, but I know they have made us very unhappy; poor mamma is prostrated with grief, she will scarcely answer me.”

“I know, Miss Croyden, and it is useless for me to attempt to relieve her sorrow.”

“What can be done for papa, do you think?”

“I am as much at a loss as yourself. Your father knows nothing that will help him, but

I am going to London to consult him further.
Have you any message to send? ”

“ Please convey my love to him, Mr. Gardner, and say we are prostrated over his imprisonment.”

CHAPTER XI

SEEKING EVIDENCE

ARRIVING in London I went directly to the prison, and entering George Croyden's cell, I conferred with him on the subject of obtaining evidence to disprove the murder, but he knew nothing whatever beyond what he related in the Chancery Court.

I showed him the bundle of papers which I had found among the deeds, and called his attention particularly to the pencil memorandum, "The person who attacked me is drowned;" but he knew no more about it than I did. Finally he saw me replace the old chain around the package as I had found it, and watching it intently for a moment he held out his hand, saying, "Let me look at it?" then as he took off the chain and examined it, he said in an undertone, "I wonder if she is alive?"

"Who do you mean?" I asked.

"Oh," he replied, "I am thinking aloud. Well, I am wondering if Madge Morrill, a

gipsy wench, is alive; let me see, she must be about thirty-six years old; if she were produced in court, knowing that my life depended on her evidence, she might speak, otherwise she would not."

"Where is she likely to be, if alive?" I inquired.

"Roaming around with her tribe," was his answer.

"And there is no telling where, I suppose?"

"Possibly in the neighbourhood of the hop gardens of Kent."

"If she can read I will advertise," I added.

"She can read well enough, but would never get hold of the daily papers," George Croyden answered.

"I will post notices in the neighbourhood offering a reward for her appearance; better still, I will go there at once."

"Do as you please, Mr. Gardner, I cannot help you," was the rejoinder.

I returned to East Looe and called upon Mistress Croyden at once, and after relating my conference with her husband, stated my intention of visiting Kent. She sighed as I mentioned the gipsy, and said: "She is at the bottom of much of my sorrow; she it was who

told me that George was drowned, and although she has visited East Looe yearly, and knew the falsehood, she never relented."

"I remember. Would you know her?" I inquired.

"I have only seen her a few times in all these eighteen years, and the last time she was passing from the servant's hall, where she had possibly been inventing more lies; she is a brazen hussy. I could scarcely be depended upon to identify her," Catherine concluded.

I decided to take a flying trip to Kent, and so eager was I to discover the gipsy, that after leaving the thickly settled districts, I watched from the train as it rushed by the highways and byways, to detect any caravan; and just before I reached my destination, they became so numerous that I despaired of ever finding Madge Morrill among such a multitude.

The result was no better than I expected. I spent three days in vain inquiry. Finally I had a thousand circulars printed: "To the gipsies: Fifty pounds reward for the discovery of Madge Morrill who yearly visits East Looe. Write or visit the undersigned within one week. Edmund Keith Gardner, East Looe."

I wrote to Catherine Croyden informing her of the result of my mission, and that I would be in East Looe for a few days seeking evidence.

On reaching East Looe, I first visited my parents, who had already been apprised of the success of the Chancery trial, but who had not yet been fully informed of the more serious phase the case had taken. I explained to my father, and his answer was characteristic, "To trust in Providence, and seek among the villagers for evidence."

On the way to my office I called upon the little doctor, and invited him to call and join me in a smoke. He readily consented, and when our pipes were lit, I explained the whole case to him.

The doctor stated that the joy of the villagers over the discovery of the lost heir had been suppressed by the horrible news of the arrest for murder. "We were going to ring the bells to welcome him home; it is a bitter disappointment to us."

"But is there not one among the inhabitants who can help me?" I inquired.

"Not one!" exclaimed the little doctor. "You see everything was wrapped in mystery,

and George is really the only one who knows anything about how it was done."

"How what was done?" I inquired.

"Why! the murder!" replied the doctor.

"And you really think he did it?"

"Who else could have done it? Great, good-natured George; everybody liked him. I don't say that he meant to do it, but he was a giant in strength, and he forgot himself."

"Were there any marks on the body when found?" I asked.

"Just finger marks around the throat, that's all; George squeezed him mighty tight there I should say."

I had grown angry at the little doctor—his manner was too easy for my excited nerves, particularly when the life of "dear George," as he styled him, hung in the balance.

"Now, doctor," I began, "you doubtless know considerable about bodily ailments, but you know nothing about law; let me tell you it is something that dosing will not make healthy; it is necessary to go right down to the roots of the disease, dig them out, and hold them in your hands before the court, and say, 'Here is the cause of the trouble, gentlemen'; and then you may save your patients from being hung,

because they kill them in the blossom of health if you don't get at the roots."

"Just so," said the little doctor, "the root of all evil."

"Bah!" I ejaculated with emphasis.

The little man looked at me, wondering what I meant by it, then loading up his pipe afresh, he said, "Come down to the shore with me."

I followed him in silence. East Looe had grown too small and too shallow, I thought.

We reached the cove at the east side of the Black Rock, and standing at the base of the cliff facing the beach, the doctor said, "It was somewhere hereabouts, as well as I remember, that I found the body."

"Did you find it?" I eagerly inquired.

"No! Oh! no! Madge Morrill, the gipsy, found it; but I was called upon as a professional man to examine it, as I always am, you know; examined scores on and off around this same spot. That's all."

"That's all!" I repeated with disgust. "But can't you describe what you saw?"

"Now look here, Mr. Gardner, I don't want to be a witness in this murder trial; I don't want to see poor George hung, and his wife left a widow for the second time."

“But, man,” I indignantly protested, “you will be the cause of it.”

“I would be no good as a witness,” he meekly responded.

I discovered that the little doctor’s mind had become dwarfed to its surroundings, and that he must be handled another way, so I said, “Look here, I don’t propose to see good-natured George, as you style him, hung and his wife left a widow for all the doctors in England or out of it, and unless you give all the information in your power, and answer what questions I propound to you, I will get my father to impeach you from the pulpit as an accessory after the fact, and subpoena you to attend court.”

“Oh! dear! dear!” exclaimed the little man, “why was I ever brought into the profession?”

“I don’t care about your profession!” I replied. “I look upon you as an ordinary mortal now; will you relate to me, or perhaps you had better not. I will——”

“Oh! come back! Mr. Gardner! I’d poison that gipsy wench if she were here; it was she that came to me in the early morning with the ill news that a corpse had been washed ashore

in the cove, so I rushed thither,—I was younger then,—and found the body just here. It was the body of a large man about thirty years old, well-clothed, with long, black, curly hair, natural curls, as the water hadn't straightened them out."

At this point the little doctor became silent.

"Did you consider at the time whether the man died from strangulation, or by drowning, or both?"

"At the inquest the verdict was 'Found drowned,'" he replied.

"Was a record made of the verdict?" I inquired.

"Yes! I have it somewhere," he answered; "there is a record giving a full description of every corpse found on this coast."

"Anything further?" I asked.

"Well, now I think of it, the body hadn't been long in the water. It wasn't swollen like drowned bodies always are; in fact, old Cap Horner (he's dead now) said, 'That 'ere chap swam ashore and died there, or else he's waterproof, his mouth is shut, ye notice.' And so it was. I remember that."

"And are the mouths of drowned bodies always open?" I inquired.

"Always," he answered, "although I remember one that wasn't, but it had a rope tied around its chin."

"And what would your inference be concerning the fact that this particular corpse had its mouth firmly closed?"

"That it died before it struck the water," the doctor replied.

"But, if strangled to death, as your words imply, would not that naturally keep the mouth open?"

"By George! it looks that way," he replied. "Yes, looking back at it, I think that he swam ashore and died afterwards."

"From the effects of strangulation?" I inquired.

"I should say so," he answered.

"Was there nothing found about the body, no papers, for instance, by which it could be identified?"

"Yes! I remember! Yes; they were taken from the gipsy as she was about to hide them in her bosom. They were finally given to Sir Anthony Croyden after the inquest, at his request."

"Could you identify those papers?" I inquired.

"It is hard to say," he replied.

"Well, doctor, how long since you saw the gipsy?"

"She comes around here every year, usually in the fall."

"Do you know where to find her?"

"No!" was his answer.

I decided to subpoena the doctor as one of the witnesses, but not to serve him until the last moment for fear he might disappear; and for the same reason I kept the package secret lest it should assist the doctor in divining my purpose.

I bid the doctor good-day, returned to my office, and jotted down the information I had drawn from him.

Many of the antiquated fishermen remembered the event, and expressed their firm belief that George Croyden had strangled the stranger, as he deserved to be; so they were more likely to end George's life by their evidence than to prolong it.

A week had now passed, but no tidings of the gipsy had been received, and I began to realise that the slim evidence of the little doctor, and the package of papers, were all I had to offer; too scant indeed to offset the charge.

I pictured Catherine Croyden's anguish if the horrible doom should be fixed, and I became so nervous that I walked to the cliff and gazed upon the stormy sea; for an east wind was blowing the waves mountain high, and they dashed upon the Black Rock immediately beneath me.

Finally I stretched myself upon the ground and in this position I was confronted by a fellow in gipsy garb, who thrust a paper into my hands, saying, "Knowest thou aught about that?"

I jumped up instantly and exclaimed, "Yes! my dear fellow! yes! Come with me!" and beyond in the road fronting my office stood a span of horses attached to a light-running gipsy wagon.

As I approached, I spied a buxom gipsy woman of about thirty-five years; her jetty curls protruded here and there from under a gaudy handkerchief which served as head-gear. She saucily asked, "Are you the man who offers a reward for a look at Madge Morrill, the gipsy?"

I replied, "I am the man who offered a reward for her appearance; will you please step down?"

“What do you want?”

“Did you know George Croyden?” I asked.

“Ask him,” she answered, at the same time pointing to the man.

That individual replied, “We knows him well enough!”

“Do you know what became of him?” I inquired.

“How should I know?” Madge answered.

I saw it was best to avoid any dispute with her, particularly as I had no subpœna for her, so I continued:

“You know, of course, that Sir Anthony Croyden is dead.”

“Yes.”

“Would you like to see George Croyden in possession of his rightful estate, or to see strangers steal it from him?”

“I don’t care now,” she replied, “since he,” pointing again to the man, “is my husband; and I like him well enough as gipsy husbands go. But there was a time when George Croyden might be hung for all I would do for him, or her.”

“And I am sure you would not see George hung, would you?—good-natured, smiling George, who never injured anybody?”



“I am sure you would not see George hung, would you?”

"You know nothing about that!" she quickly answered.

"I have heard so," I remarked.

"Well, he was a mild-tempered youth; but what is this about hanging? Has George Croyden been heard from?"

I answered, "George Croyden has returned home. A relative in the midland counties claimed the estate, but lost the case, and the lawyers have now arrested George on the charge of murder, and he is in the Fleet Street prison. The case is to be tried next Thursday, and you are the only person who can save him."

"How do you know?" she asked.

"You remember the package?"

"I think so," she said hesitatingly.

"And you saw the body of the stranger?"

"Is George charged with murdering that fellow?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well! I don't know that it will do me any good to see George's face again, but I want to see London, and I'll appear on certain conditions."

"What are they?" I eagerly asked.

"That you will be responsible for the safety of this team during our absence; the horses

must be carefully exercised daily; that our expenses in London, and to and fro, be paid; and that you won't call upon me as a witness, although I will be present, unless you find that George is likely to hang without my evidence."

I consented to all this, went to the mansion with them, instructed the groom regarding the team, and arranged at the village-inn for their accommodation until the following Monday; then, having in the meantime received a subpœna from the Old Bailey, I surprised the little doctor into threatening to drown himself; but in a few hours thereof the trio were on the train with me going rapidly towards London town.

Catherine Croyden and Caroline travelled in a separate compartment of the same train.

Having reached the metropolis, I found lodgings in an old inn for the gipsies, in compliance with their desire, and I compelled the doctor to room with me, and to follow me wherever the exigencies of the case required.

CHAPTER XII

TRIAL FOR MURDER—THE OLD FISHERMAN'S EVIDENCE

I VISITED George Croyden once more in prison, but he had nothing further to disclose, and seemed desirous of being left alone.

Finally the day fixed for the trial arrived. The Court at the Old Bailey was filled to overflowing. There is a certain element in every large city which appears to live off the excitement furnished in the courts where criminal cases are tried.

Catherine Croyden and her daughter sat near the witness stand, where they could view the face of him so long absent, and who might be led away from them forever. Catherine's face was veiled, but her bent head indicated her gloomy forebodings.

The lawyers had so hurried matters that the case was the first on the calendar.

The Lord Chief Justice,—whose name we must omit,—was as determined a man as ever

sat on an English bench to mete out death to his fellow-mortals. Knowing his record, I had little hope of any loop-hole of escape that was not supported by facts.

George Croyden was brought into court handcuffed to an officer, who substituted the railing for himself on reaching the witness stand.

The proceedings were opened with prayer, and the clerk made the customary cry of "Oyez, oyez"; and the lawyers who were the instigators of the case,—although Newton Bramble was present in the background,—were duly sworn.

Lawyer Ketchem, who was the pleader in the Chancery suit, acted also in this case, the other two filling the role of coadjutors.

Mr. Ketchem opened the case by saying:

"Your Worship, eighteen years ago, on the night of March 10, 1849, or the early morning of the following day, a cold-blooded murder was committed on the shores of East Looe, in Cornwall; the body of one Edward Marshall was found on the beach, and, according to the record kept of such cases, was unidentified, and was buried in the parish churchyard, at the expense of the parish.

“ At the date of the discovery of the body, George Croyden, heir to the manor of Croyden, disappeared, which added to the mystery attached to the finding of the body; and it was reported at the time, and very generally believed, that George Croyden had been drowned—a generous reward offered for the finding of his body failing to meet with its discovery.

“ A case affecting the hereditary succession to Croyden estate, in which we were employed as counsel for the claimant, having miraculously brought George Croyden to light from his long hiding-place, the suspicion of foul play became most strongly directed against the prisoner on account of his remarkable unwillingness to make good his claim to the estate, or to recognise his wife; and the charge of murder has been instituted to carry out the divine ordination, that whosoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

“ We are candid in stating that we have no witnesses to produce, with the exception of one old fisherman, the inhabitants of that district being very clannish; and several of them, on being approached by me for the purpose of obtaining evidence, threatened to cut me up

and use me for crab-bait. The present witness was among that number, but discovering his name, we subpoenaed him and brought him hither.

“We would further state that the time which has elapsed since the finding of the body appears to have blurred the memory of those who were present.

“We will now call the witness. Joseph Rhodes, step into the witness-box.”

An old grey-headed fisherman stepped forward and called out loudly, “That beant my name!”

“What is your name, then?” asked the clerk.

“My name is Nicholas Stocker!”

In the process of administering the oath, on being told to kiss the book, the old fisherman indicated his unwillingness to testify by remarking, “I can tell the truth without having to kiss anything!”

Then Mr. Ketchem began to question him.

“Nicholas Stocker, how long have you been a resident of East Looe?”

“All my life,” was the answer.

“How old are you?”

“Ninety-seven or so, next fishing-moon.”

"Do you remember anything about the discovery of a body in the cove east of Black Rock, eighteen years ago?"

"What's thou know about Black Rock?"

"Answer my question."

"I remember a host of bodies, on and off," replied the old fisherman.

"I refer to one particular body discovered eighteen years ago, on the night George Croyden disappeared."

"Well! what about un?" crustily asked the old fisherman.

"I am asking you what you know about it," spoke up Mr. Ketchem.

"All I know about un is that he were a thief! and that he got just what he deserved!" shouted the old man.

"We are not asking you for your opinion," the lawyer testily remarked.

"No! but ye got it," answered old Nicholas.

"What were you doing at the time of the discovery of the body?"

"I was in bed, asleep. I am no night prowler."

"Did you see the body?"

"I saw some of my comrades carrying it to the shanty Maister Gardner now uses as an

office, and I remarked, 'Pity there was a law against using him for bait.' "

"You can step down!" said the lawyer.

"I ain't quite helpless, though I be ninety-seven next fishing-moon," rejoined the old fisherman.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRISONER'S EVIDENCE

THE lawyer, somewhat disconcerted at the result of Nicholas Stocker's testimony, addressed the judge, saying: "We have no alternative but to ask the Court to direct the prisoner to proceed with the explanation of his disappearance on the fatal day, granting us the privilege of cross-examining him afterwards."

The judge, who was nothing if not severe, directed that the prisoner be sworn.

George Croyden took the Testament, pressed it to his lips with a steady hand, and returned it to the clerk.

I then addressed the judge, saying, "Am I to understand, your Worship, that you will compel the prisoner to give information which may, through the absence of absolute knowledge of the facts by the prosecution, lead to his own conviction?"

"He is merely required to explain his dis-

appearance from East Looe since the finding of the body," answered the judge.

"I think, your Worship, that his wife has the moral and legal right to ask that question. There is positively no evidence to prove that the prisoner ever saw the individual whose body was found."

"There is enough circumstantial evidence to indicate that he knows all about it!" the judge tartly answered.

"Your Worship, in making such a serious charge, it would appear from all precedent that there should be a reason advanced for associating my client with the case; there is usually a motive when a murder is committed. Before George Croyden is called upon to answer for his life, I think any knowledge which the prosecution may have concerning the prisoner's guilt should be introduced. In the first place, the parties whose names figure in the prosecution, believing George Croyden to be dead, and knowing that the record of the marriage had been stolen from the register, instituted a suit on behalf of one Newton Bramble, as claimant to the estate of Croyden; and the production of the certificate frustrated their designs.

"Now, I would ask, how comes it that these

men, living so far away from East Looe, are so familiar with the facts concerning the finding of the body, even to knowing the name of the individual, something not before obtainable; and also what connection they had with the theft of the certificate?"

The lawyers conferred, and Mr. Ketchem replied that they were not on trial; that such questions might possibly be permissible later in the trial, but at this stage they would materially strengthen the prisoner's defence.

"Am I to understand, your Worship, that the prisoner is put on his defence?"

The judge replied, "The allegation as set forth is sufficient reason in such a charge."

Knowing that it was no use to take an exception to his Worship's ruling, I turned to the prisoner and said in an undertone, "You are on trial for your life. For your wife's sake, who is well-nigh frantic with grief, and for your daughter's honour, who is to live after you, arouse yourself and make the effort of your life. The sun will shine brighter upon your future life after these dark clouds are swept away. Give a succinct account of your doings since the fatal day."

Thus adjured, George Croyden looked at

the judge, and intuitively feeling that there was no sympathy to be derived from that quarter, he turned around and faced the jury.

He began slowly at first, as though the remembrance of that fatal day was painful to him; but he soon warmed up to a relation of his doings.

“My name is George Croyden, only son of the late Sir Anthony Croyden, of the manor of Croyden, in the parish of East Looe.

“After I had left college, having no profession or fixed occupation beyond that of following in my father’s footsteps as the possessor of Croyden Manor, I roamed about the estate and surrounding country, whiling the time away in contemplation, as is the custom of young men in similar circumstances.

“At the age of twenty-three years I became enamoured of Catherine Penistan, only daughter of the Reverend Howard Penistan, then rector of East Looe; and against the wishes of my father, we were married.

“We lived very happily together at the rectory, my mother visiting us frequently.

“One evening, about seven months after our marriage, as I was strolling about the rectory grounds, I saw a light flash in the vestry room

of the church, which is not far distant from the rectory, and without stopping to notify my wife, I hastened thither, and looking through the vestry window, I saw a strange man in the act of abstracting a leaf from a book which lay on the table. Without reflecting upon the damage I might do, but realising that the robbery was a sacrilege, I took a stone from the wall forming the boundary of the churchyard, and hurled it through the window. An iron bar to which the leaded window was secured diverted the stone so that it missed my aim. The stranger rapidly folded the abstracted leaf, and placing it in his bosom, seized the dark lantern which was on the table, and fled the room. Hastening around to intercept him, the stranger eluded me by hiding in one of the pews, and escaped through a side door of the church immediately after I had entered. I followed in pursuit, but the spot being dark, he could not be clearly discerned, although I heard his footsteps speeding towards the shore.

“I reached the beach in time to hear the splash of oars, and concluding from the phosphorescent flash that the man was unacquainted with the lay of the coast, I threw myself into

the water and swam after the boat, reaching it just outside a dangerous promontory locally known as the Black Rock. I seized one of the oars and twisted it from the stranger's grasp, so as to impede his progress, and immediately he arose in the boat and struck me with the other oar, but the water prevented it from seriously injuring me. I seized this oar also and wrenched it from him; the motion brought his body towards the gunwale, and seizing him by the throat with one hand, I held him until he relaxed his grip, which was likewise on my throat. I then placed my hand in his bosom and recovered the stolen certificate, and started to swim ashore.

"I had not proceeded far when a call from the boat for help decided me to return and guide the boat ashore; but I had no sooner reached the boat than the stranger struck me in the neck with a knife. Then I again started for the shore, when I became unconscious, and I knew no more until the following day, when I found myself in a gipsy caravan, with Madge Morrill, a gipsy lass, standing over me.

"I inquired how I came there, and she answered that I had run against her the previous evening, and imagining that something

unusual was the matter, she had followed me; and later had found me washed on the shore near Black Rock, and had summoned the men from the camp to take me thither.

“Without exhibiting the slightest sympathy or regret, she also informed me that my wife had been drowned. I attempted to arise, but was so weak through loss of blood that I fell back unconscious. After a few days I gained sufficient strength to stand, and desired to visit my wife’s grave.

“There was nothing said at the time about the discovery of the stranger’s body, but with the assistance of two of the gipsy men I visited what I supposed, and was informed, was my wife’s grave; but which, in fact, as I recently discovered, was the grave of the stranger.

“I again became unconscious through bodily weakness, and when I recovered it was to find the caravan moving away from the neighbourhood.

“The time which elapsed before I fully recovered my strength was several weeks; and realising that my wife was lost to me, and that my father was the indirect cause of it, and taking umbrage thereat, I decided to go to foreign shores.

“ I took passage from Plymouth for Mexico, where I worked in the gold fields for several years; and from there I went to Buenos Ayres, where I remained until a few months ago, when enquiry being made concerning my parents, I was shocked to discover that my wife and a daughter were alive.

“ I returned to the scenes of my youth, and after baffling an attempt to wrest Croyden estate from its rightful owner, I was arrested on the grave charge of murder.

“ If I am guilty in aught I have committed, I am prepared to meet the full penalty of the law; but my heart has ever been free from any knowledge of guilt, although filled with overwhelming sorrow which my youth encountered.”

“ Have you finished? ” asked his Worship.

“ I think of nothing else,” replied the prisoner.

At this point I interposed the question, “ You knew nothing of the discovery of the stranger’s body after the attack? ”

Mr. Ketchem objected on the ground that it was putting a negative question into the prisoner’s mouth.

“ Objection sustained,” said his Worship.

"Did you hear anything of the discovery of the body before you went abroad?" I next asked.

Here again the lawyer interrupted by saying, "It is taken for granted that the prisoner did know. It was impossible for it to be concealed."

Ignoring this remark, I said to the prisoner, "Answer my question quickly."

The prisoner replied, "I knew nothing about the discovery of the body until after my return from abroad a few months ago."

"You left the stranger in the boat after you were stabbed, and swam away?"

"He was kneeling in the boat as he lowered the knife into my body, and I swam away leaving him in that position."

"We object," said the prosecution, "on the ground that the prisoner already stated that the night was dark."

"Objection sustained," said the judge.

"In what location was the boat at the time of the stabbing?" I inquired.

"We object on the same ground, that the night was dark," said Mr. Ketchem.

"Objection sustained," said the judge.

I then addressed the court, stating that I had

no desire to compel that the prisoner's replies to these questions be put in evidence; but having familiarised myself with every foot of the coast, I asked for my own information. My reasons would appear later.

Here Mr. Ketchem again interposed that valuable time was being taken up by the defence in propounding illogical questions.

I warmly retorted that I didn't care if it took the court's time until doomsday, as long as there was a thread of hope for the prisoner.

Not waiting for the judge to comment on this remark, I said to the prisoner, "Answer the question!"

"To the west of the Black Rock."

"We object to this forcing of answers," said the prosecution.

The judge said, "I think, Mr. Gardner, that your questions should be put in such a deliberate manner that the prosecution may have an opportunity to object before the answers are given."

"Then, your Worship, I will keep on asking, and they can continue objecting. I don't propose to let this man drift to the gallows for the sake of opening my mouth a few times."

“Have you experienced any such cases before?” inquired his Worship.

“No, your Worship; and if I ever do again, I will take care that my client shall benefit by my experience in the rulings of this court.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE DOCTOR'S EVIDENCE

AT this juncture I called the doctor to the stand. He came tremblingly, uttering in an undertone, "Mercy! gentlemen, mercy! I am only a doctor, a very little man."

The doctor having been sworn, I addressed him, saying, "Pay attention to me, sir! Do you understand what the prisoner is being tried for?"

"Certainly. Murder! murder!" the doctor replied, in a voice which belied his apparent fear.

"He is being tried for his life," I continued, "and if you know of anything in the evidence which has been adduced that can be strengthened by facts coming under your observation at the time of the finding of the stranger's body, it is your bounden duty to give it. You must not misinterpret the questions put by men anxious to bring their fellow-man to the gal-

lows, nor fear the majesty of the law when it is arrayed in garments likely to awe the uninitiated; you simply have to respect your oath and fear nothing."

"We object," said the prosecution. "It is conveyed in the manner of a threat; it is calculated to intimidate the witness."

"I think, Mr. Gardner, the witness is old enough to answer for himself," said his Worship.

"Some animals need the whip," I precipitately observed.

"Do you compare the witness to a horse?" asked the judge.

"There are animals more stubborn than the horse," I replied; "but I will leave the comparison until after the witness has given his evidence."

I then commanded the doctor to repeat in a loud voice what he saw on the fatal day, eighteen years ago.

Thus adjured, the little man swelled with importance, and spoke as follows:

"I heard the report of George Croyden being missed, and went to the cliffs, thinking he might have fallen therefrom; then I descended to the beach and found Madge Morrill,

the gipsy wench, standing over the body of a man. I felt his pulse. He was dead, although his body was warm; he could not have been dead very long.

“I said to the gipsy lass, ‘When did you find the body?’ She answered, ‘About an hour ago. He was just alive then; he gave me these papers, and pointed to some writing on the back of one of them; he was too ill to speak; he vomited terribly.’

“I observed that his mouth was closed, and that his knees were drawn up to his stomach.

“We held an inquest, and a verdict was rendered ‘found drowned.’ There was nothing in the package of papers, nor about his person, to indicate his name or where he came from; he was buried in the churchyard.”

“What became of the papers which you state the gipsy girl had in her hands?” I inquired.

“I took them from her. She was unwilling to relinquish them at first, but upon threatening her with imprisonment, she reluctantly gave them up to me.”

“Was there anything about those papers that you could remember, or that you could identify?”

Here the prosecution objected on the ground that it was unlikely, after a period of eighteen years, that the memory could be relied upon for a knowledge sufficient to entitle it to credence in a murder case.

I replied, "I intend that those papers shall be put in evidence, and I insist upon getting an answer to the question."

The little doctor answered, "There was a peculiarity about the package which I don't recall to mind for the moment; I think, however, that I could identify it."

Taking the package from my pocket and passing it to the doctor, I asked, "Is there anything about this package to remind you of that handed to you by the gipsy girl?"

Here the prosecution objected that unless the papers were marked at the time by a responsible person, and that mark re-established under oath by the same individual, they could not be put in evidence.

The judge interposed to ask if the papers had been so marked.

I replied, "I hope to connect the finding of the stranger's body in the condition explained by the evidence, through the identity of this package; but I insist upon propounding as

many questions as I deem necessary regarding it.

"I think you will," curtly replied his Worship.

I again addressed the doctor. "What have you to say regarding the identity of this package?"

The doctor replied, "I recognise in it a similarity to the package handed to me by the gipsy; I remember particularly this gew-gaw," pointing to the chain, "because the gipsy demanded it back as belonging to her; and I also remember a pencil memorandum which the gipsy stated the stranger had pointed out to her."

"What was the purport of that writing?"

Here again the prosecution vehemently objected that the question was irrelevant.

I insisted that it was the turning point of the case.

The judge sustained the question.

"It referred to the drowning of the man who assaulted him, but not knowing of any attack at the time, it was not understood; now it is apparent that——"

"Stop! stop!" yelled Mr. Ketchem.

"Stop!" cried the judge.

“——that George Croyden was intended,” concluded the little doctor.

“Strike that off the records,” said the judge.

“That is all for the present,” I said to the doctor. “You would have made a good lawyer. Take your seat and don’t leave it.”

I then called for Madge Morrill, the gipsy.

CHAPTER XV

THE GIPSY'S EVIDENCE

MADGE appeared with the handkerchief still fastened around her head.

The gipsy having been sworn, I said to her, "Madge Morrill, look at the prisoner, and tell me if you can identify him."

She looked saucily at George Croyden, and said to him, "Who am I?"

The prisoner answered, "You are Madge Morrill, I should say."

"And you are George Croyden," she replied.

Here the prosecution interfered, saying, "The identity on both sides is a mere supposition, inasmuch as there was an apparent hesitation."

"Well, there is no doubt about their personal identity," I replied; "and there are facts connected with these two individuals which I am bound to elucidate."

Here the prosecution again interposed, and said, "Your Worship, we think it but fair that we should investigate the moral character of the witness before her testimony is accepted."

The gipsy retorted, "My moral character will stand a better test than yours, I'll go bail."

The judge commanded her to keep silence or he would commit her for contempt.

I replied to this unmanly and unjust threat, "Your Worship, it is characteristic of the prosecution to attempt to slander all the testimony I produce; I think the retaliation is not out of place; I earnestly endorse it."

"It is not a time for bandying words," his Worship replied.

Mr. Ketchem said, "We would like to ask this woman a few questions."

"How long had you known George Croyden before his marriage?"

"I knew him by name ever since I was a little child; our caravan was in the habit of locating in the woods at the back of Croyden mansion."

"Were you on intimate terms with him?"

"Yes, quite well; we were almost like real lovers."

At this point I interposed by saying,

“Madge, your definition of the word intimate is possibly the correct one, but it is not what these men wish to imply or convey. In plain English, as they should put the question, it is: ‘Were you guilty of any impropriety or unusual conduct with George Croydon,’—that is, any immoral behaviour?”

“Never! never! George never even kissed me, although he might have hundreds of times if he wanted to; he was always a gentleman, full of fun, but he never once went beyond that.” Then realising that the prosecution was trying to injure George Croyden at the expense of her character, she shook her fist at the lawyer, and said, “I’ll be bound you would, and if your name is *Ketchup*, you are the fellow who came to our camp a few days after the stranger was discovered, to inquire concerning that package and the wedding certificate, and you were not as particular as George was, either; but I didn’t want you, and threatened to turn the dogs on you if you didn’t quit the locality.”

After this retort she looked at him with her jetty eyes until the lawyer was completely cowed.

I then said to the witness, “Relate what you

know of the prisoner up to the time of his leaving your caravan to go abroad."

"I first got on speaking acquaintance with George Croyden when he returned from college; he would frequently visit the neighbourhood of our encampment, and would sometimes stop to talk with me.

"Once he patted me on the face, and said, 'You are not a bad-looking girl, but your hair needs grooming.' I swore at him, and he went away laughing.

"The next time I saw him, he was driving a pair of colts, and they had silver curb-chains on. I had my face washed, and my hair was combed out so that it hung down to my feet; he stopped on seeing me, and said, 'Madge, you look as fresh as a rose. I am almost tempted to come down and kiss you.'

" 'Why don't you?' I asked.

"He laughed at this.

"I said, 'What are you going to give me for a birthday present?'

"He answered, 'Do gipsies have birthdays?'

" 'Of course they do,' I replied.

" 'What would you like?' said he.

" 'A gold ring,' said I.

“ ‘That you can’t have,’ said he, ‘because it is a token of affection. Name something else.’

“ ‘Give me a pair of those silver curb-chains,’ said I.

“ He drove away, but the very next time he came our way he tossed me a small package, saying, ‘Don’t put those in your nose or ears, Madge.’

“ ‘I know where to put them,’ said I.

“ The next time I saw him was at the rectory when he was courting the rector’s daughter.

“ And the next time after that I was hanging around the village one night after he was married, and seeing a man running towards the shore with George chasing him, I followed, feeling that something unusual was the matter. I saw George plunge into the sea, and after that the waves deadened all other sounds.

“ I went around the cliff to the cove, and after a considerable time a body was thrown upon the beach by the waves. I went up to it, and found it was George, and he seemed to be dead. I dragged him beyond the rising tide, and hastened to the camp for help, and our men assisted me in taking him to my wagon; there we restored him to consciousness.



“ Don’t put those in your nose or ears, Madge ”

“Going again to the beach in the early morning to see what became of the other man, I found him sitting at the base of the cliff in the same cove. He had crawled up there, thinking the tide might reach him, but it only comes that high in very stormy weather.

“I went up to him. He was vomiting badly, and his knees went up to his chin every time he vomited. He couldn't speak for vomiting, but he took out a package of papers, and pointing to some writing on the back of one, passed the package over to me. The papers were loose, so I took one of the silver curb-chains which George had given me, and fastened it around them.

“Shortly after this the man gasped horribly and died.

“Not long afterwards, I saw somebody approaching, and the doctor, this little fellow here (turning around and pointing at the doctor), came up and said, ‘What have you here, girl?’ Then he felt the man's wrist and said, ‘Hasn't been dead long.’ Then he began to search the man's pockets. I said, ‘These are his papers; he gave them to me.’ The doctor demanded the papers, and I refused to give them up; but he threatened to send me to gaol

for the balance of my natural life and to warm quarters afterwards, and snatched the package from me.

“ I asked him to give back my curb-chain, but he refused. I then got mad, and I thought, ‘ George Croyden didn’t care for me, so I’ll just make trouble for him,’ and I started to find his wife, and on the way I met her hurrying to the cliffs. I said to her, ‘ George is drowned.’ She screamed and rushed towards the cliff. I followed, and saw her slide down its dizzy side, bounce out and strike the Black Rock, and then fall into the sea.

“ Sir Anthony Croyden and his servants, who were searching among the rocks, saw her, and saved her from drowning.

“ I thought I would make a complete job by telling George his wife was drowned. He grew frantic, and tried to leave the wagon, but he was too weak, and fell back unconscious. When he recovered, he appealed so pathetically to be taken to his wife’s grave, that two of our men led him to that of the stranger; he fell upon it, and carried on so pitifully that I was sorry for what I had done. But I loved him, and I couldn’t undo it.

“ After that we journeyed up the country

by easy stages, and one day George stole away, and I never saw him again until to-day; and that is all I know, and now I will go back to East Looe."

"One moment, Madge," I said; and taking the package and passing it to her, I asked, "Can you identify any part of this package?"

Madge looked at it, and said, "Yes; here is one of the curb-chains which George gave me."

"Do you recognise the handwriting?" I inquired.

"No," she answered. "I know that at the time I understood it to mean that the man who attacked the stranger was drowned, and that meant George, of course."

Here again the prosecution interposed. They said that the witness acknowledged she could not identify the writing or any part of the package except by the presence of the curb-chain, and there were thousands of curb-chains of similar design in use; they objected therefore to the latter being put in evidence.

I answered, "There could be no clearer evidence than that established by the present witness. If the production of this package, found as it was by me among the late Sir Anthony Croyden's papers, who, the doctor

stated, was given the custody of it, and which is fully identified by the woman, is not conclusive, there is no use attempting to produce any evidence whatever on behalf of the prisoner."

I was fumbling the package, and was struck by the presence of two short pieces of silk ribbon which were fastened to each end of the chain, and used as a means to form a bow on the package.

I asked the witness, "Did the curb-chain which you used on the package have any appendage, *i.e.*, anything else fastened to it?"

"Yes," was the answer, "I used them for garters, and not being long enough, I tied ribbons to each end, to secure them with, something like this";—and without a moment's hesitation or a blush, she bent over, and lifting her skirts, fumbled around a few seconds, and produced a silver curb-chain with ribbons attached.

Taking it from her, and blushing the while, I dangled it before the eyes of the astonished jurymen, saying: "What need ye of any further witness?" Then taking its mate from the package, I passed them to the foreman of the jury, a grey-bearded old gentleman, who took them and examined them, smiling the

while, and afterwards he passed them around to his companions.

I then remarked in a loud voice, "Gentlemen! if any further proof is necessary of the innocence of the prisoner, it must come from Edward Marshall, out of the grave!"

CHAPTER XVI

SUMMING UP

TURNING to the judge, I said: "And now, your Worship, I desire to say a few words touching the character of the three individuals who have dared to take the liberty of appearing in one of her Majesty's courts as prosecutors.

"Chagrined at the loss of a case instituted in Chancery to wrest by foul means an estate belonging to others, they trumped up this murder charge on the chance of there being no proof against it. It mattered not to them whether the rightful owner came into possession of the property, they cared nothing whether the innocent man before you was hanged, as long as their personal wishes were realised, and what those wishes are, emanating from such debased minds, it is not difficult to imagine.

"These men were the real perpetrators of

the theft of the marriage certificate at the vestry eighteen years ago; they are the ones who hired Edward Marshall to go down to East Looe and steal the certificate; they are the indirect cause of that man's death."

Holding up the package, I exclaimed, "These papers are stained with that man's blood!

"There is nothing in the evidence to indicate that George Croyden was responsible for the death of Edward Marshall, but on the contrary, the latter's death was brought about through his own carelessness in trusting himself to the mercy of a treacherous coast unknown to him. It was the bounden duty of George Croyden, or any other right-minded man, to arrest the thief; in so doing George Croyden not only jeopardised his own life, but through the complications that followed, was compelled to live a life full of sorrowful reflections.

"I not only ask that the prisoner be released, free from every stain upon his character, but that the court take steps to impeach these three knaves who caused his arrest."

The judge leered upon me, and remarked, "This is strong language!"

I responded, "It is not strong enough! such rascals should be made an example of for their temerity and audacity in appearing as advocates of her Majesty's laws!"

The court became in an uproar, but the judge soon restored order by rapping his gavel.

"You are disturbing the equanimity of this court room," the judge remarked; then turning to the jury he said: "Gentlemen of the jury, attend to me.

"You have followed the incidents leading up to the murder of Edward Marshall at East Looe; you have heard the evidence.

"The question, in my judgment, is not so much whether the baubles exhibited by the gipsy witness are the same as presented to her by the prisoner, but as to whether Edward Marshall came to his death by strangulation at the hands of George Croyden, or by drowning, or both causes, such as being weakened by strangulation beyond the power to preserve himself in the water.

"If you consider his death caused by strangulation, you will render a verdict accordingly; if by strangulation and drowning combined, you will so render it; in either case, let your

decision be framed with a due respect for the law in such cases made and provided."

I held up my hand and said: "Your Worship, it must not be forgotten that those present at the inquest, who saw the body and were more capable of judging of the cause of death than entire strangers to the event are eighteen years afterward, rendered a verdict that the man was found drowned, meaning that the cause of death was drowning."

The judge looked at me savagely, then said to the jury, "You have my charge, please retire."

Neither Catherine Croyden nor her daughter had been called upon during the trial, but they sat in the front seat facing the judge and the prisoner, and I was too deeply concerned throughout the trial to go to them.

The jury had retired, and I sat watching the three scoundrels on the opposite side of the counsel table; they were huddled in a bunch along with the erstwhile claimant, and were gesticulating to each other like Frenchmen.

Turning around I looked at the prisoner, who stood gazing in an undefined way, and appeared to be the least concerned as to what fate awaited him. His thoughts were evi-

dently far away from the court room. At that moment an officer appeared and took him away to a cell to await his final call for judgment; and the judge subsequently left his seat to partake of refreshment.

CHAPTER XVII

THE VERDICT

IT was shortly after one o'clock when the judge resumed his seat, and after nervously handling some papers which lay before him, he gazed in a curious manner around the court room, which had become darkened by a portending storm without.

He then ordered the jury to appear, also that the prisoner be brought before him.

George Croyden was the first to arrive. He was led in from his cell handcuffed to an officer, and appeared to be unconcerned.

The officer stood in the dock beside him without removing the manacles, reasoning from previous experiences that it was a matter of a few minutes only before the prisoner would have to be escorted back to his cell again.

At this point the jury came in. The prisoner glanced at them as though his attention was merely attracted by moving objects. Nearly all of the jurymen eyed the prisoner as they passed him.

The court crier stepped forward and addressed the jury, saying:

“During the rendition of the verdict, the jurors will arise and remain standing until the same is officially recorded and announced.” Then with a motion, he signalled the jurors to arise, and said solemnly, “Jurors, look upon the prisoner. Prisoner look upon the jurors.”

At that moment a flash of lightning lit up the room, and was followed by an awful crash of thunder immediately overhead, resembling the discharge of heavy artillery.

As the lightning’s glare died away, the room became wrapped in inky darkness, and the vast audience was awed into silence.

Suddenly a clarion voice resounded, “This room requires the lightnings of heaven to pierce the gloom of death with which its atmosphere is darkened!”

Again the lightning flashed, and again the thunder crashed, and again from out the inky darkness that clarion voice resounded:

“The judge of all men sends His mighty voice and flaming sword to free the innocent!”

For several minutes a dead silence prevailed as though the court were wrapped in death.

As the darkness began to clear away, the

prosecutors were seen huddled in a bunch, cowed by the awful revelations; and the judge was as immobile as death.

Finally the judge directed the crier to proceed, and he resumed, "How say you, gentlemen of the jury, do you find the prisoner at the bar, George Croyden, guilty of the felony of murder whereof he stands indicted, or not guilty?"

The foreman of the jury, holding a paper in his hand, which he flourished as he spoke, raised his voice to the bawling pitch, exclaiming: "We are unanimous in finding the prisoner 'not guilty,' and we have reduced it to writing so that there may be no mistake about it; and we have also appended our belief that the charge was trumped up by men devoid of character, not for the purpose of supporting the law, but for their own aggrandizement."

The audience displayed its satisfaction by smiles and audible whisperings, a few hysterical ones going to the shocking extreme of shouting "hurrah," and were ignominiously expelled from the court room. One little old man, in his enthusiasm, shouted "Gentle Jesus,"¹ and was found on the court-house

¹ Witnessed by the author.

steps late in the day, still rubbing his head as a result of his blasphemy.

As soon as order was restored the judge frowned on the foreman, and tartly answered, "You have done your duty in rendering your verdict; it is not necessary for you to give your opinions regarding the case."

"We think it is due to this innocent man that we voice our sentiments to the world," said greybeard.

"The world is not trying this case," replied the judge.

"We think the world would be better for knowing it," replied the old gentleman.

"Cease thy talk, man! I pass the verdict here." Then scowling at the prisoner, he continued, "Prisoner, look at me."

George Croyden turned in an unconcerned manner and looked at the judge, who said, "Fortunately for you, the verdict has been rendered in your favour, consequently you are at liberty to walk away from this court, a free man; it has not been made clear to me, however, how Edward Marshall met his death."

To the surprise of the judge and to all present the prisoner answered: "Neither has it been made clear to me, but this I *do* know,

although it happened eighteen years ago, it has been efficacious in creating a living death for me. But for the stigma, I prefer to go down to the grave." Then turning to the jury and bowing, he said: "I thank you, gentlemen," but he did not leave the dock.

As soon as the judge had rendered the verdict, Catherine Croyden arose to go to her husband, but as soon as he commenced his statement she stopped, and listened eagerly to his words, and as she divined their meaning, she uplifted her hands, and with an agonised cry, fell into the arms of her daughter.

CHAPTER XVIII

BEFORE LEAVING THE COURT ROOM

YOU are discharged," said the judge. Still the prisoner did not move. "You had better explain to your client," remarked the judge, addressing me.

I answered, "I wish to ask your Worship, if in making a record of the verdict you intend incorporating the censure made by the jury against the conspirators in this case?"

"It is unnecessary," replied the judge.

"It would be only charitable to do so," I replied, "but since the writing is unnecessary among the court records, will you kindly give me the written verdict, so that my client can preserve it?"

"It is the property of the court," answered the judge.

"Mr. Gardner, I will see that you get a duplicate engrossed on parchment," testily put in the foreman of the jury.

At this stage, Madge Morrill, who had waited to hear the verdict, bawled out, "Give me back my silver curb-chains! give me back my garters!"

"Put that hussy out!" shouted the judge.

"My stocking is coming——"

Here an officer came forward and seized her, but her husband intervened, and it looked as though an ugly broil would ensue.

I stepped to Madge Morrill, and said, "Madge, those chains must be preserved. Stop at East Looe and you shall get a diamond pair." Madge then left the court with her husband.

George Croyden beckoned me to him and whispered, "Explain to Mistress Croyden that I am unfit to converse with her at this time; the disclosures of to-day have disturbed my mind, so that I beg her to be gracious to me until I reach East Looe; I shall go thither at once."

George Croyden left the court with bowed head. Catherine Croyden arose and looked anxiously after his retreating figure, and I went to her and explained what he had desired me to say.

She sighed, and said: "Come, Caroline, we will go home also."

Catherine was so concerned over the trial that she left all her luggage behind her.

And now, the charge of murder ended, it may interest the lovers of justice to learn that within a very few weeks after this trial the judge who officiated was examined by qualified physicians appointed for that purpose, who decided that he was insane, and he was committed to an asylum, in which he shortly after died.

CHAPTER XIX

A SERMON AT PARTING

AND now this story must go back to that period when George had been taken away in the gipsy caravan; when his body was weak, and his his young heart racked with overwhelming sorrow for her he thought dead.

He had determined to leave the land of his birth, and go to a foreign clime the moment he was strong enough to undertake the journey; and this determination was hastened by an incident which happened shortly afterwards.

Reaching the outskirts of Liskeard, he secretly left the gipsy encampment, and strolled into the town; there he was attracted by a motley crowd of men, women, and children, who had assembled outside the old parish church; many of them were in tears, and forgetting his own sorrow for the moment in his sympathy for others, he questioned one of the group, who informed him that a body of

miners were about to leave in search of gold in Mexico, and that the old rector was going to address them from the pulpit.

As soon as the church doors were opened, George entered with the rest.

The miners, numbering some thirty souls, who were about to leave their native land, sat together in the pews facing the pulpit, while their wives and others who were interested in the proceedings scattered themselves in the adjoining seats.

It being a secular day, the old rector came unattended either by curate or the formality of the clerk, whose Sunday duties chiefly involved the repeating of "Amen," after each prayer.

The prayers, being orthodox, were rigidly fixed for certain days and special occasions; and those entrusted with the compilation of these prayers in the long ago seeming to have forgotten those who, unable to obtain a livelihood on the earth's surface, were digging out an existence deep down in its bowels, there was no departing from the forms already laid down, so that any reference to the miners would have to be made in the nature of an address.

Having ended these preliminaries, the old rector ascended the pulpit and for a few minutes gazed sadly around upon the troubled faces before him, for most of them bore the outlines of toil and hardship.

Then he addressed them saying: "Men and brethren, the words that I shall utter require no Scripture text for reference, although there are many that are applicable. I choose rather to speak to you from the impulses of the heart, as a father would to his children.

"For sixty years I have preached to congregations in this church.

"Many of those whom I preached to in my advent to this living are sleeping in the churchyard yonder; many of you who have reached man's estate and are the fathers of families were brought to me in your mother's arms to be baptised at the font. Your children have also received the baptismal blessing at my hands, so that aside from my religious duties in pointing out the path of rectitude, I have felt a responsibility for your worldly welfare.

"The stupendous question concerning the worldly conditions of man I am afraid will never be satisfactorily solved; the two extremes

between the very rich and the very poor admit of so many diversities of the different stages between, that it is difficult to decide which stage is the most conducive to happiness.

“There are so many things constantly occurring in our lives at variance with our ideas of happiness, it is safe to say that no person is so blessed that he knoweth not sorrow, or is so tortured that the sunshine does not occasionally shed its brightness upon his path.

“A moderate competence, which can be maintained through life, would appear to be the happy medium which fears not famine nor gives room for wanton display.

“There are many ill conditions, however, which preponderate over the good, so that it is difficult to satisfy the mind at all times that the provisions of Providence are all-wise.

“We are more or less creatures of natural circumstance; the Esquimau is condemned to a life of eternal winter, whilst the Hottentot swelters under the heat of the tropics; others there are who enjoy a happy medium, which appears to be by far the most gratifying.

“So, too, in the walks of life; some men have attained lofty positions commanding great wealth, others are condemned to toil for their

daily bread; both conditions are attended with more or less inconvenience and unhappiness; the happy medium is obviously the best.

“Yet with all these plausible remarks we cannot dispose of the fact that there will always be lofty positions for men to aspire unto and worry over, and likewise humble toil for those who are compelled by environment and force of circumstance to follow it; these two extremes will be ever present, but the happy medium is what you must aim at.

“It has been said by one in higher authority than myself that no man’s worldly condition is permanent. That is undoubtedly true if we accept the details, but if our worldly condition means our financial condition, and I have no doubt the remark was intended for such, as an old man, who has witnessed the daily struggles of your fathers and those who have come after them, I should say that their worldly condition, practically speaking, was about as permanent as it well could be.

“I have admired your patience under severe provocation to rebel; I have seen dire oppression cease through your determination to outlive it, and it is only fairness to the manhood you displayed in many cases of destitution, for

me to state it was in the power of those for whose aggrandisement you risked your lives and lost the sunshine, to have brought more happiness into your homes. I make this remark to show you that my sympathy has penetrated below the surface, but it is not said with the intention of disaffecting you, or to make those who remain dissatisfied with their lot; my duty is to encourage you, and to lead you into the path which will tend to brighten your lives, for whether rich or poor, there is a day coming to all of us when we must lay down the pick and shovel forever. Let not the closing scenes of life, and the glinting of the dawn of our eternal home be marred by unhappy reflections upon opportunities for noble actions left undone.

“The desire to improve one’s worldly condition, particularly when it relieves us from pecuniary hardships, is a sacred duty, and one to be highly commended, but it calls for extra wisdom in regulating how far that desire shall extend to comprehend what our worldly happiness requires.

“Solomon said, ‘Contentment is great riches.’ I am more than ever satisfied that it is the wisest remark ever made to guide frail

humanity. It is too much to expect, however, that man can be contented on the bare necessities of life, but it is well to limit our desires within a sphere that will bring contentment.

“And now, my brethren, I have done moralising with you, and will make a few remarks on what more directly concerns your every-day life.

“Several of you who have decided to try your fortunes in a foreign soil will leave wives and families at home. To you I will say that your first duty is to them. New scenes and new faces will have an attraction for you, but do not forget the anxious faces you have left at home. Remember her whom, when a young girl, you courted and loved and took to your bosom; remember her who has clung to you through every adversity; remember the little ones who have learned to love you unmindful of the storm without, or the hunger within; they will miss you; remember that they too some day will learn to love other hearts, and that the lesson which you teach them now will have a lasting effect; remember that when the sun is shining for you in foreign lands there may be a tempest at home; remember that

when you are having a feast abroad, your loved ones may be pinched with hunger, and with many of the ills of life fluttering about their path, yet piercing the gloom with longing eyes to learn how he fares who left them.

“To the unmarried men I would say, you all have sweethearts at home. Remember, that although they may appear rough without, they have tender hearts within, those hearts are in your keeping; they too, will be waiting and longing to hear from you, and when other lips and other hearts their tales of love shall tell in words of subtler meaning, don’t forget that still waters run deepest, and the young girl who has entrusted her heart to your keeping is too far away to chide you, but though silent, has a deeper love for you.

“Lastly, to married and single, let me warn you that the companionship of the glass is to the detriment of your loved ones, it is misleading, it is full of deceit and will ensnare you.

“I would like to hear of the golden days of your prosperity, and to witness your return to your loved ones, bringing sufficient competence for contentment; I would like to see the smiles with which your loved ones will welcome

your return, much more than experience the regret which their tears of sorrow cause me at your departure. But I have lived more than the allotted time of man; I cannot hope to hear of your prosperity; I cannot hope to live to watch over those who may need a guiding hand like mine, for I have passed the transition stage which allows a man to look back fondly on the golden days of youth, and I have now but to await the call which will summon me to that portal, to receive my welcome to the realms of everlasting day.

“Men, do not forget an old man’s words, your old rector’s words; they will prove golden to you in the darkest midnight hour, they will bring you back to your loved ones, with hearts unscathed.

“And now a word to your wives and sweethearts. I admonish you to be faithful to your husbands and lovers; depart not from the path of virtue; so will your hearts be ready to greet them openly without fear and trembling upon their return.”

Then lifting his hands to bless them, he said: “May He, who knows the sparrow’s fall and hears the hungry raven’s call, look down from His holy seat and hear your prayers, and so

guide and govern your lives in the purity of His love, that when your earthly career is ended, I may meet you at Heaven's gate, and introduce you to that bliss which knows no parting, nor sorrow, nor strife."

The old rector then descended the pulpit, and stood underneath the great arch at the main entrance of the church, and as the men came near, he addressed them saying: "It was through this arch ye were brought to me when little babes to be baptised, it was through this arch your loved ones were carried to receive the last solemn rites of burial, but ye are passing out of it to go to foreign climes."

Then he took each in turn by the hand, saying: "Good-bye, James; God bless you, William; have a care of your cups, John, good-bye; Thomas, don't forget your bonnie Jane, good-bye, my lad;" and so on. For each he had a kindly word to suit his particular case, but ever through the trying ordeal, the tears trickled down his wrinkled cheeks.

"Good-bye! I lose you, my children; good-bye!"

At last came George Croyden with saddened face and extended hand. "And you, sir! you are a stranger?"

“Bless me too, father, for I need it very much; I am going with them.”

“God bless you, my son.”

And so the old rector bid good-bye to those hard-struggling men whom he loved; bid good-bye to those whom he never saw again on earth.

CHAPTER XX

AN INTRODUCTION ABROAD

SAD as the parting was between the old rector and the miners, still more sorrowful were the farewell scenes between husband, wife, and children, and sweetheart and lover.

All doubt and misgiving were cleared up in affection's warm embrace, and resolutions were formed which, if fulfilled, would make the angels rejoice; the men were going far away, it might be for years, and it might be forever.

The husbands and lovers started on their long journey, and that night and for many years afterwards, the fond wives dreamed of stormy seas, of black hulls floating against the docks with nobody on board, of strange craft, always getting ready to sail from foreign shores, but never weighing anchor.

Within two days the miners had shipped from Plymouth, and after a few weeks, arrived at the scene of their future labours, in Mexico.

George Croyden remained with the miners, and was looked upon by them as one removed from their ilk by superior education and talents, but they tolerated his presence with the same courtesy they would have shown at home. He continued in the same pensive mood that he left with, and after a few years, having accumulated considerable wealth, he bid his companions farewell, and without any particular object in view, journeyed to Buenos Ayres.

At Buenos Ayres he located in the delightful suburbs and gave himself up to a life of ease, but he still bore that saddened countenance which had never left him since that fatal night.

How long he would have remained in Buenos Ayres but for a somewhat trivial occurrence, is a conjecture. There are always little things creeping into our lives to change our plans.

George Croyden took delight in wandering about a particular neighbourhood, which comprised one of the most beautiful estates in Buenos Ayres; whether the fates led him to do so the reader must judge, but certain it was, this spot was destined to change the whole course of his life.

The owner of this beautiful property was no less a personage than Colonel Reginald Glanville, who, after making himself conspicuous for bravery in a war between Chile and Peru, visited Buenos Ayres, and married into the possession of a most estimable lady and her estate. An only daughter blessed this marriage.

It will never be known whether George Croyden ever had a glimpse of the beautiful daughter before the eventful day which brought about an introduction, but if so, he was a silent admirer.

On this particular day, George was on horseback, cantering along the highway bordering the estate, when he espied two ladies and a gentleman at some distance, making hasty steps toward him, whilst in a pasture fenced off from the road a large bull was trying to break through. Realising their danger, George put spurs to his horse and in a few seconds was among them, but too late. The animal, growing more impatient, tried to jump the fence, and the weight of its huge body broke it down; tossing its head it pawed the earth and bellowed with rage, then lowering its horns, it made a dash towards the frightened

group. The ladies screamed and huddled together, while the gentleman stood guard with a light cane.

Quick as the lightning flash George spurred his horse in front of them, and shouted: "Help the ladies over the fence, Sirrah!" at the same time turning his horse so as to face the bull; he received the full charge, the impact forcing his horse to its haunches.

George slid out of the saddle and, springing to the younger woman, who had just secured the safety of the elder lady, he took her in his strong arms, and lifted her bodily over the fence, then turning to the gentleman, he ejaculated, "Save yourself!"

"No! no!" said the gentleman, "now the ladies are safe, this is too good an opportunity, it is our turn to charge the bull!" Whilst he talked he bombarded the animal with stones, with which the road abounded, and George following his example, the bull fled as precipitately as it came.

Wiping the dust off his right hand, the gentleman extended it to George, saying: "You have done us a signal service, sir, possibly saved one or more of us from serious, if not fatal injury. I am Colonel Glanville, and

I live on this estate with my wife and daughter."

After the bull had retired the ladies approached the fence; so that, as Colonel Glanville mentioned his wife and daughter, he bowed, and waved his hand gracefully towards them.

George bowed in return to a gracious courtesy from the ladies.

The elder lady said, "We are under lasting obligations to you, sir!"

George replied, "I am deeply thankful that what portended to be a serious affair has led instead to this pleasant introduction; my name is George Croyden, and I am a Cornishman."

"You will come right along with us to the house, Mr. Croyden," said Colonel Glanville. "I will send a groom to pick up your horse; it is quietly browsing after its unfriendly introduction, no doubt."

George offered his arm to the younger lady, and she timidly placed the tips of her fingers thereon, because such a proceeding was unknown to her.

"Yes! yes! that is English enough and pretty enough, Mr. Croyden!" and addressing

his wife, Colonel Glanville said, "Come, my dear! this English fashion of arming it along through life looks quite sociable," and he placed his wife's arm in his.

As they entered the estate at the main entrance and proceeded along the path which led through an avenue of fine old trees, the colonel elicited from George that he had been seeking solace abroad as a relief from sorrow, but that his pilgrimage hadn't cured it, and that he intended returning to his native land after a few months' sojourn in Buenos Ayres.

"You have no ties here?" asked Colonel Glanville.

"None whatever, or elsewhere, for that matter, saving the natural love of home," answered George.

"Ah! home! sweet home!" mused the colonel. "Well, Mr. Croyden, if you desire to extend your kindly assistance beyond that of champion, you will make your home with us during your stay; the mansion is large, and the rooms numerous, too much so; they look deserted and are deserted, saving for my daughter here, who sometimes finds time to stray into a room that has been shut up for a long time, and sings for the sake of hearing the echoes."

“Oh! papa!” remonstrated the daughter, “each room receives a share of my attention!”

“And each room has a different echo, I’ll be bound,” retorted her father.

George Croyden knew that such a thing as inviting a comparative stranger to make his stay at any of the homes in Buenos Ayres was almost without a precedent, and that as a rule the daughters of the household were put under such restraint that they were seldom left out of the espionage of their parents, and that few of them even conversed with a suitor until he was accepted and a day set for the wedding; therefore, when he reached the mansion, George said, “Colonel Glanville, this pleasant walk has amply repaid me for any little effort I may have made in your behalf. I beg leave to retire to my hostelry.”

“Mr. Croyden,” replied Colonel Glanville, “you need make no excuses or apologies here; we are not natives, and although my wife has more or less Spanish blood in her veins, she fell in love with me simply because I left off masquerading. I was never guilty of keeping her awake during our courtship by playing a guitar underneath her window; I went straight to her heart; I came! I saw! I conquered!”

“Now, Reginald,” laughingly interposed the colonel’s wife, “it may not interest Mr. Croyden to know whether you made yourself ridiculous or not.”

“What I am coming at, my dear, is this: that we want Mr. Croyden to give up masquerading, and to understand that he is welcome to the hospitality of our home as long as he desires.”

“Yes, indeed, Mr. Croyden,” answered the lady, “don’t decline. We would appreciate your company very much.”

“I will consider your extremely kind offer,” George replied.

“Dinner at six o’clock,” said Colonel Glanville, “and if you are not here, I won’t like it a bit.”

“I will join you at dinner,” George replied, and bowed himself away.

CHAPTER XXI

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE OF MARGARET

TO an attentive mind it would have been significant that George Croyden, who had grown somewhat careless in the matter of dress, took particular pains with his toilet that afternoon, and instead of waiting the near approach of the appointed hour, wended his way back immediately to Colonel Glanville's mansion, and loitered underneath the trees, finally ascending the arched stairway leading to the spacious verandah which fronted the second story of the house. There, seated in a huge rocker, George gazed listlessly on the vista before him. An ample lawn, studded with tropical shrubs, extended to a silver stream which divided it from a park of majestic trees, whilst further in the background the elevated lands were picturesquely dotted with herds of cattle pasturing on the herbage of never-fading green.

Was he still thinking of his lost love of eight

long years ago? or had he in so short an acquaintance become enamoured of the beautiful face of Margaret Glanville?

George had been seated thus for nearly an hour when a window facing on the verandah was opened and Margaret appeared.

As she approached, George arose, and took the hand extended to him.

"I hope I am not disturbing your reverie, Mr. Croyden," she said with a gladsome voice, "but I am accustomed to obey papa in all things, and he commissioned me to entertain you, and later to escort you to dinner."

"I could wish for no greater happiness, Miss Glanville," George replied; "but personally I am afraid I have lost the art of being agreeable."

"I have had little occasion to improve that art, Mr. Croyden," Margaret commented, "for our neighbours are very far apart, and their habits are not like ours. I suppose I may be thankful for my liberty, although never having missed it I can't realise how the young ladies feel who are compelled by custom to live secluded lives. Evidently they have grown accustomed to it, for several who have visited us, chaperoned by their parents as a matter of

course, are delightful girls, and very beautiful, too."

"I do not doubt it," George replied, "but I have had no opportunity to establish it."

"But in your own country," Margaret suggested.

"There is a variety; but outside of my relatives I knew but one whom I considered beautiful and good. Her maiden name was Catherine Penistan; she became my wife, and after seven months of supreme happiness she—she died."

His hesitation in finishing this sentence, and his sad expression, deterred the beautiful girl beside him from expressing her sympathy until George resumed, "She was found drowned, and I have exiled myself from the land of my birth ever since."

"How very sad!" Margaret replied, partly rising in the sudden shock it gave; "my heart beats in sympathy for you."

"You are the first and only one who has said as much; but in justice I must add that no opportunity was afforded my relatives to extend their sympathy."

"Are your parents alive?" Margaret inquired.



“ I know but one whom I consider beautiful and good ”

"I know not," George replied. "My father objected to our marriage on the ground that such an alliance was a departure from any precedent among his ancestors."

"Is your father so prominent, then?" inquired Margaret.

"Prominent in name only; he is, or was, Sir Anthony Croyden, of Croyden Manor."

"And your wife, sir?"

"Was the daughter of the Reverend Howard Penistan, Rector of East Looe."

"It is very sad, and grieves me very much," the young lady replied.

Further conversation was stopped by the appearance of Colonel Glanville, who also came out of the window, and laughingly remarked, "Well, who is the best talker?"

"Papa, Mr. Croyden has been relating some very sad——" and here Margaret hesitated.

"Yes! I'll be bound he has, and hasn't known you one sunset yet; well, come to dinner!"

After dinner they all seated themselves on the verandah, and Colonel Glanville entertained his visitor by giving accounts of his youthful escapades,—innocent enough,—and of his courtship, the relation of which seemed

to fill him with delightful memories, for he laughed unceasingly.

Colonel Glanville did not wait for George to make up his mind to come to stay, but with a rapidity of action characteristic of him, he sent to the hostelry for his effects, and summarily installed him in a suite of rooms overlooking the lawn.

George did not resent this interference with his rights, but accepted it with a good grace; in fact, it may be inferred that it suited him to be near the beautiful girl who had so recently entered into his life.

In order to relate how George and Margaret became deeply attached, and how they acted towards each other, it would be necessary to experience it; but the days flew into weeks, and the weeks into months, and they were one long day of glorious sunshine and love. The young couple walked around the estate, or in the neighbourhood, and read together and talked together. One evening as they were seated on the verandah enjoying the delightful breezes and listening to the mavis carolling its love song, George took Margaret by the hand and said, "Margaret, do you think you could learn to love me?"

Margaret looked at him earnestly and answered, "If there is room for additional learning, yes; but I fear I have been too apt a pupil. First you interested me in your lost wife, so that I love her memory; and you have gradually insinuated yourself into my heart, so that I feel the daily need of your presence."

"And you, my dear Margaret, have so wrought upon my heart, that the love for my lost wife has become merged into a deeper love for you." He then bent over and kissed her, kissed her for the first time during all those delightful walks and conversations.

Margaret became startled, and blushed, and exclaimed, "Is it customary for lovers to be so demonstrative?"

George was taken aback, and showed it by his downcast look and hesitation. "I can answer for nobody but myself," George confusedly answered; "I felt I must kiss you."

"Did Catherine Penistan indulge you in this respect?" asked Margaret.

"Not until after we were engaged to be married," George replied.

"Why do you treat me differently?" Margaret inquired.

George bent over her, and kissing her again,

said, "Let this kiss signify we are engaged, my dear."

How the days and weeks rolled by more happily still; how the couple were eventually married and lived constantly like lovers; how a son was born to them, to add to their happiness; how they continued to live in the mansion with its numerous rooms, in which echoes were still heard, as in the days before George Croyden put in an appearance, gives only an epitome of their happy lives.

Ten years of wedded bliss had passed, and might have continued indefinitely; but the fates, who are always at work to even up the balance, interfered.

Only one event in all those ten joyous years tended to disturb the equanimity of the household. Colonel Glanville, after a long illness, had joined his fathers. There was a period of deep sorrow, but its intensity was materially softened by the Colonel's happy forethought in constantly reminding them that the sorrowful parting must come, not only to him, but to all; that beauty failed, and bright eyes became dim; but that love, true love, was all that humanity might hope to keep alive.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DISCOVERY

ONE day Margaret was conversing with George over the probability of his parents being alive, and solicitous for her husband's happiness, and thinking that she would have a pleasant surprise in store for him, she wrote the following letter:

“BUENOS AYRES, *February 14, 1867.*

“*To the Postmaster at East Looe, Cornwall:*

“SIR.—Will you be good enough to inform the writer if Sir Anthony Croyden and Lady Croyden, his wife, are still alive, and very much oblige,

“Yours respectfully,

“MARGARET GLANVILLE.”

Margaret used her maiden name so as to avoid suspicion, and the loving wife passed the six weeks or so which would elapse before a reply could be received, in secret exultation over the pleasant surprise she would have for her husband.

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The answer came promptly, as ill news generally seems to do.

“POST OFFICE, EAST LOOE, CORNWALL, *March 2, 1867.*

“MADAM.—Replying to your letter of the 14th ulto. Sir Anthony Croyden is alive and well; as also are his daughter-in-law and granddaughter, the wife and daughter respectively of his son George, who mysteriously disappeared, under circumstances leading to the belief that he was drowned, a few months after his marriage.

“Lady Croyden died through grief at her son’s loss, shortly after his disappearance.

“I am, Madam, your obedient servant,

“SAMUEL GUY, P. M.”

When this letter was delivered to Margaret, she went secretly to one of the rooms, unused saving for the echo, and with a heaviness at heart which foreboded evil portent, she began to read. Her hands trembled violently as she finished, and an echo resounded, such as was never before heard in that house; such sounds of grief and lamentation, not piercing, but moaning and sighing, like the zephyrs through the pines; grief had taken hold of the vital chords of the heart, and was tuning them to the breaking point.

Uplifting her arms in the depth of her agony, she cried, “Oh! my God! what shall I

do! what shall I do! She is alive! and a daughter also! and I! what am I? Merciful father, help me! This is truly the pleasant surprise in store for him; but for me, nothing but death awaits!”

The echo resounded, “Nothing but death awaits.”

The echo’s refrain startled her, and she turned her head in the direction of the sound; then she renewed her agonised cry.

“Why did I write? To ruin my own happiness and that of our boy? George would never have known!”

The echo repeated, “Never have known.”

And in her great distress, the devil entered and tempted her; “George would never have known; he need not know now; destroy the letter!”

But there was no response in her heart, or echo from the room, to this great temptation.

“George must know; he shall know!” she cried; and immediately she applied her thoughts in preparing a way to support the great sorrow which was to be her lot from thenceforth; but the shock had been too great, and she fell unconscious to the floor.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE REVELATION

GEORGE had missed her, and the numerous rooms were echoing to his call, "Margaret, my beloved, where art thou?" But the dreamer never heard. He finally came to the room in which she lay, and seeing her prostrate form, and fearing some dreadful mishap, he rushed to her and raising her in his arms, exclaimed, "My darling! what is the matter?"

The impulse awakened Margaret to the realisation of her awful position, and she exclaimed, "George! let me die! I am ruined! I am lost!"

"Tell me, my love! what has happened?"

No answer forthcoming, George pressed her fondly to his bosom and kissed her.

Seeing the letter on the floor, Margaret stooped and picked it up, and as she tottered

towards a chair, she placed the missive in her bosom.

George followed the movement with a startled look. The thought momentarily swept through his brain, "Had anybody conspired to ruin his happiness?" No, no! He instantly banished the unholy thought; no one could come between him and his great devotion to her.

At last Margaret fortified herself for the unhappy duty which lay before her, and as she studied George's countenance, she introduced the subject by saying, "I have some news to relate, George, that will awaken happy remembrances in your heart, but which has already blighted my happiness."

"Oh! stop, my dear!" George exclaimed; "nothing shall ever bring me happiness that will lessen yours."

"You know not the import, George; sit down and let me talk to you.

"The account you gave me of your battle with the stranger, and of your finding yourself with the gipsies after your recovery, was graphic enough, but it never occurred to me until this moment that you are unable to substantiate the truth concerning Catherine's

death, because you continued with the gipsies until just before you left England. I know the matter is painful to you to revert to, but for my sake, kindly give your version of the case over again."

George instantly surmised that something dreadful was about to be revealed to him, for he looked at Margaret intently, and she gazed upon him in return, with a sad countenance.

"My dear Margaret, I have related to you, truthfully, every particle of my history from the time I was a boy; and not one thing, good nor trifling, have I omitted."

"I believe you, George," said the unhappy woman, "but tell me how you learnt that Catherine was dead."

George realised the truth now, and with his voice choking with fear, he answered, "The gipsy woman informed me, when I was helpless, and afterwards led me to a newly-made grave, stating it was Catherine's, and I wept over it."

"I am sure you did, George." Then producing the fatal letter from her bosom, she placed it in his hands, saying, "The gipsy lied to you."

George's hands trembled so violently as he

read, that he had to place the letter on his knees ; and as he finished reading, and realised its awful import, he placed both hands to his temples, and with a cry of despair, fell forwards upon the floor.

CHAPTER XXIV

MUTUAL EXPLANATIONS

AS soon as Margaret had revived him, she assisted him to a couch, and, locking the door of the room, and secreting the letter, she sat beside him, holding his hands in hers, and tried to console him, saying, "Never mind, George; it is all a horrible mistake, but it need concern nobody but our two selves, and Catherine, of course."

George sorrowfully replied, "It is too late now, Margaret. I will never leave you."

"Now, George, stop and consider; if it had been me instead of Catherine, would you forsake me, knowing that I had remained true to you? And I am sure that you loved Catherine's memory very deeply before I became the unlucky mark of your affection."

"Oh! don't be cruel, Margaret! I am innocent of any wrong intentions."

"Yes, George, and I am afraid our talk on

the subject will end unhappily for both, unless we duly consider what we have to say. As we know the worst, let us carefully plan how to act, and we will discuss matters to-morrow. Let us throw aside any appearance of despair, so that my mother may not be made unhappy. It is my intention to keep the matter secret from her; and, sad as it is to say, I am glad that papa is not alive to discover his daughter's unhappy degradation."

In the evening they assembled on the verandah as usual, and the song of the mavis was sung, but the soul of its music had fled. So doleful, indeed, did it sound, that Margaret arose, and whispered in a broken voice, "George, my darling, I bid you good-night. You will sleep in our bridal chamber as usual, and I will take the room adjoining it, so that our secret may not be discovered."

George mechanically caught her by the arm, as though she were about to fly from him, and said with a choking voice, "Margaret, have you discarded me? Will your heart permit you to take this dreadful step?"

"Hush! George; my love for you will never change, but your lawful wife is alive, and you must go to her!"

“I can’t do it, Margaret; I can never leave you. Let us forget it, and live together as we have done, or I shall surely die. Catherine’s grief for me must have subsided long ago, and my daughter I never saw. Besides, what will become of our dear boy?”

“I love you the same as ever, George, and my heart is breaking at the thought of losing you; but knowing that Catherine is alive, I cannot be guilty of any unlawful love, and of deceiving her. You would learn to despise me, and the happy life we have lived together up to this time would no longer be a support to me, as it is in this hour of trial.”

“Oh! my love, have I lost your attachment at a single blow? Don’t say so, Margaret. I will never despise you!”

“Let us retire, George, and we will both think it over in our separate rooms, and to-morrow decide upon what steps to take. Good-night.”

As soon as Margaret had entered the house, George arose and quietly descended to the lawn, and went in a direction where the trees would hide him from view.

Margaret, who remained hidden by the window curtains, witnessed his departure, and

silently followed. She saw him put his arms against a tree and rest his head upon them, and then an outburst of grief awakened the stillness of the night.

“Oh! my darling, must I lose you? Must I, after sorrowing long years for her whom I thought dead, and finding you, buried that sorrow in our great love, be exiled again with double sorrow burning at my heart? I cannot leave thee, Margaret; and if thy woman’s heart can drive me from thee, mine will surely remain true to thee, for it will cease to beat.”

And at this point most dreadful sobs escaped him, and placing his hands to his heart, he stepped deeper into the gloom, as though to hide his sorrow from the world.

Margaret watched with pitiful eyes, and her bosom rose and fell like the swelling of the ocean, for she dearly loved him; but she was of noble lineage, and mustering courage, she ran after his retreating figure, and calling, “George! George!” arrested his steps. Then throwing herself into his arms, she exclaimed, “George, my dear, this is not the way to retain my love; be noble, be brave.”

“You ask me to be noble and brave,” he re-

plied, "and at one stroke you have deprived me of all that is worth living for. I have lost heart and faith, and with it courage and nobility have fled."

"What would you have me do, George? You would not demand that I act in any way unworthy of myself?"

"If it is unworthy, Margaret, no. Is it not enough to lose your fond embrace? Would it be too much to expect that a cold 'good-night' might be supplemented with that token which denotes affection, though it must rest there?"

"Oh! George, my dear, I did not mean it," she said between her tears. "I shall miss you, too. I will kiss you good-night if it will encourage you to hope until you become reconciled to the changed conditions."

"I shall never leave you," George answered.

"Come, George, rest to-night and we will decide to-morrow." Then she put her arm in his, and together they walked sorrowfully towards the mansion.

At the threshold of his room, Margaret put her arms around his neck, and kissed him affectionately. George pressed her to his bosom and whispered mournfully, "So suddenly to

lose you, my love, and forever." And they parted as man and wife that night.

Neither slept, and they were together the following day much as they had ever been.

George had nothing to suggest to help straighten out the unhappy entanglement; but it was finally arranged that they would at once journey to England together, and that George should visit his old home, and have ample time to accustom himself to the changed conditions, and to make himself known to his wife.

Margaret promised to remain in England to give him moral support until he was happily domiciled.

Upon arrival in England, a comfortable home was secured for Margaret and her son at Exeter, and kissing them an affectionate but sorrowful good-bye, George left them and proceeded to East Looe; where, in order the more readily to conceal his identity, he assumed the role of collector of rags and bones.

CHAPTER XXV

BACK TO EAST LOOE

AFTER leaving the court room, George Croyden with rapid strides reached St. Pancras station. There was something about his hurried actions and wandering eyes that attracted the attention of an officer, who carefully scanned his features.

Trains come and go with scarcely any intermission at St. Pancras. One was now approaching the platform on which George stood, and the officer placed his hand firmly on his arm, saying, "Down or up, sir?"

George gazed upon him and answered "Down."

"Here's your car, sir," and he locked the carriage door.

Away the train went rushing through the foggy city, out into the suburbs, across the dusty roads, until its course lay through the green fields; and after a few hours George Croyden arrived at East Looe.

Stepping upon the platform, he walked slowly through the shady lane, as though in deep thought. Proceeding past the old mansion grounds, he stopped suddenly to look at a raven perched overhead.

“Croak! croak!” quoth the raven.

George quickened his steps and went in the direction of the cliff above the Black Rock.

Reaching the edge of the cliff, he took a picture from his bosom and gazed upon it; then, holding it in both hands, he lifted his face to heaven in the attitude of prayer.

His guardian angel did not forsake him, even now, for as he stood, a bare-footed urchin had stolen up to him, dragging a basket of bones.

“Say, Mister, ain’t ye Rags and Bones? Ain’t ye going to buy of us any more? We uns have missed ye.”

George gazed upon the lad with moistened eyes, and asked, “Where is your father?”

“Haven’t any; father’s dead; got drowned.”

George continued to gaze upon the boy for a few minutes, as if weighing in his mind what he had said, then passed him a coin, and returning the picture to his bosom, with bowed head he took his way towards the little cottage.

CHAPTER XXVI

AFTER EIGHTEEN YEARS

CATHERINE CROYDEN, accompanied by her daughter, returned to East Looe on a later train. Arriving at the mansion, and without changing her traveling costume, she requested Caroline to await her return.

Catherine walked briskly towards the cliffs, and looked intently among the rocks beneath; and finally, as though afraid of making some horrible discovery, she gazed upon the tumultuous sea a moment, and shuddered; then, retracing her steps, she walked towards the cottage.

As she entered, she espied her husband seated in a chair, with his head resting on his arms on a table.

Catherine went up to him, and placing her arms lovingly around his neck said, "My long-lost husband, is your heart lost to me?"

He put his arms around her and drew her to

him, and kissed her, but did not answer; his thoughts were too much troubled to speak to her at that moment.

Catherine knelt beside him, and nestled her head in his bosom, until the fluttering of his heart made known to her woman's discernment that she had surmised aright; that he was wavering betwixt love and duty.

Still she said not a word, although her heart was ready to break. She felt that her husband was not to blame. Innocent of her existence, his heart had found another.

After the lapse of several minutes she said quietly, "Will you speak to me, George?"

Pressing her to his bosom, he said, "My dear Catherine, I am lost. I don't know what to do. I feel that it had been better if I had died that night along with the stranger, rather than have lived to cause sorrow worse than murder."

"Who is she, George? Is she worthy of your love?" Catherine asked.

Ignoring the question, George continued, "If I had known you were alive, I would have flown to your arms from the uttermost parts of the earth. For eight years I mourned for you, and at last your old love reverted to me from another."

“But, my dear, is her love so much better than mine had ever been?” pleaded Catherine.

“It took eight long, weary years, and yet my love for you, Catherine, was still fresh in me. How is it possible, then, for me to abandon the new love in a moment; how is it possible to reconcile myself to the awful fact that she can be no longer mine?”

“Come to your own home, my dear,” Catherine answered. “I promise not to intrude myself upon you. There in the room in which your boyhood’s days were spent, you will be able to collect yourself in reverting to the happy days before sorrow came upon you.”

“My dear Catherine, don’t press me to go; have patience with me yet a little while, until all the wrongs connected with my life have been cleared away. I feel guilty of many things, yet they have all come about without any disposition to do harm. The estate is yours, irrevocably, as long as you live, and for our daughter afterwards. Let me not take a step that might embroil you; let me remain here until I have cleared the mystery connected with my absence.”

“Tell me now, George, or I will surely die—

does she know of all the circumstances attending our marriage?"

"Everything, Catherine. I have kept nothing from her; in fact, she made the discovery of your being alive."

"Where is she now?"

"At Exeter, where her son is receiving tuition at one of the colleges. I have not seen her since we arrived, and I have been so persecuted that I have not written to her."

"You made mention of her son," Catherine remarked with considerable agitation.

"Our son," George replied.

The shock this news conveyed silenced her for a few minutes; then she resumed, "Does your knowledge of her disposition lead you to believe that a communication from me would be graciously received?" asked Catherine.

"Her disposition is much like your own," he answered.

Catherine still clung affectionately to him, and continued her pleading. "My dear, I will be no obstacle to your love. For eighteen years I have loved your memory as of old; this love kept afresh should have decided me that you were alive. I often dreamt that you were,

but I feel that my love, strong as it is, will never take the place of your later love, because your old love for me has become merged in that love. I wish I had died, too."

At this point the poor woman shed bitter tears, exclaiming, "Must I lose you again for ever? Was my love ever so unnecessary to your existence that you can treat me thus? George! George——" and her sobs prevented her from speaking further.

The unfortunate man pressed her still closer to his bosom and kissed her, saying, "I will not leave you, Catherine. I seem to love you better than ever; and with that love my heart still beats for her who came to me when all the world was cold. But however much my affection is beyond my immediate control, my duty is apparent. I will not fail in it. Have faith in me, Catherine, and I will try to forget her for your sake, but you must help me—you must teach me how." At this juncture he removed his arm from her, and resumed the position in which she first found him.

The throbbing of his heart could be distinctly heard, and Catherine again clasped him, saying, "Dear heart, don't grieve; I will help you; I will try to be happy in your lives. But

won't you come home, George? You need food and rest."

"Soon, my dear, soon; let me alone for a few hours longer so that I can collect my scattered senses. I feel so weighted down that I am lost."

"Do you want me to leave you alone, George?"

"I have wronged you both unintentionally," he answered, "and I want to think upon how to act."

"You will do nothing to cause us more sorrow, George? Promise me that."

"Surely not, my dear."

"Say you will not, George."

"I will not! You will find me here."

Catherine kissed him and walked sadly away from the cottage.

Reaching the mansion, she went to her daughter and said, "Caroline, I have been at the cottage to interview your father, my long-lost husband," and then she burst into tears.

Caroline clung to her lovingly, and said, "Mother dear, what is the matter?"

"Oh! my child! I can't tell you without breaking my heart. He thought me dead, and

his love for me is lost. After all these years of sorrow and affection for his memory, to have him appear the husband of another. Oh, that I had died! My child, you have never had a father."

"Dear mother, don't worry on my account. You have been everything to me, and I never knew it was essential to my happiness to have a father."

"Yes, my dear; but my happiness has been centred in the one fond memory of him."

"Don't grieve, mother dear. We will live for each other, as we have done."

"It is changed, Caroline. I have seen my husband alive, and he belongs to me."

"Won't he come to you?"

"Yes, oh yes, he will come; but his love I want. His heart is not his to give."

Caroline could say nothing in reply. She was too young and inexperienced in affairs of the heart to know what deep affection meant; so she clasped her hands and looked at the floor. Finally an idea struck her, and she said, "Mother, let me go to him; it is right that I should become known to him."

Catherine looked at her beautiful daughter, with all her freshness of youth and hope, and

wondered why the thought had not intruded itself before; so she answered, "Go to him, my dear, and take a basket of lunch along with you, because he has evidently fasted for a long time."

CHAPTER XXVII

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

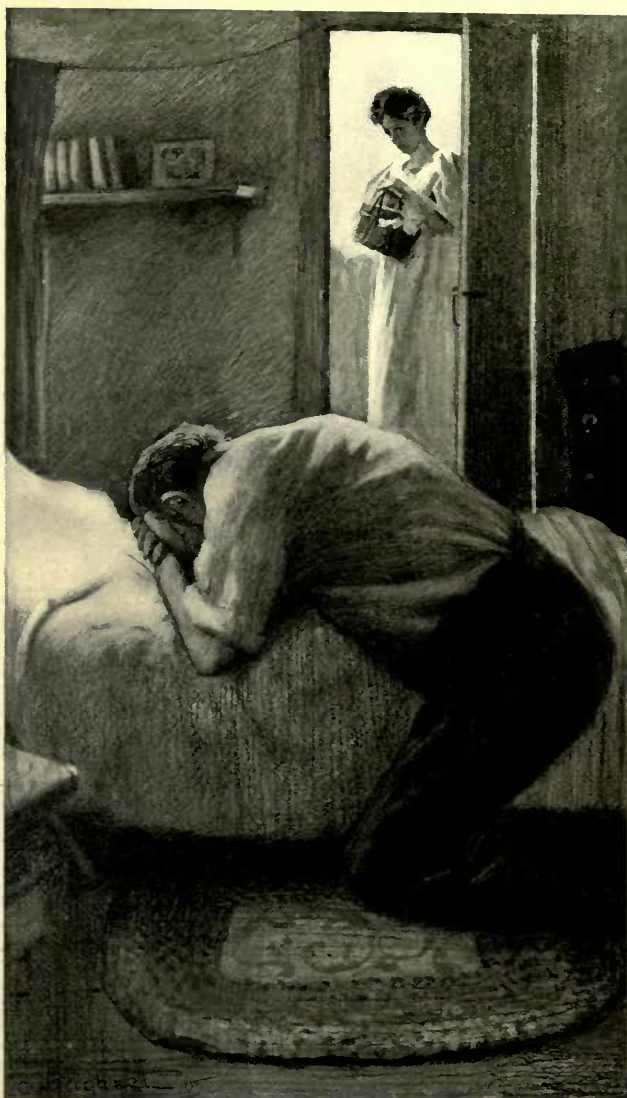
TAKING the basket of lunch, Caroline kissed her mother and proceeded on her way to the cottage with a palpitating heart.

From childhood up, the only persons she had known were her mother and grandparents and the servants.

The mother's great sorrow had made her lead a secluded life for several years, and when her daughter was old enough she shared her solitude.

No father's smile or mild reproof had ever charmed her heart or depressed her spirit, and it was with considerable misgiving and hesitation that she at last halted at the cottage door.

Caroline had seen her father at the trial, and noticed his saddened countenance; but her chief effort was in attempting to reconcile him with Rags and Bones, whom she had frequently



“She saw her father kneeling by the bedside with his face in his hands”

seen plying his calling of rags and bones collector.

As she journeyed to the cottage she tried to think upon something suitable to say, but she could not. She never knew a father's love, and her father had never spoken to her as such.

Caroline remained at the door hesitating, then reflecting upon her mother's sorrow, she opened the door and timidly peeped in. She saw her father kneeling by the bedside with his face in his hands, and just at that moment he was lifting his voice to his Maker, thus:

“O Thou, who knowest the heart, look down with mercy from Thy Holy Temple upon Thy servant, who is bowed down with anguish too grievous to be borne; and as Thou in Thy infinite wisdom didst guide my feet o'er moor and fen and crag and torrent, so shed Thy light upon my more darksome way, which chosen in garish day pointed not to the impending gloom beyond; that I may enter the path where duty lies, which love's hand beckoning from a fairer shrine blinds from my view. Deal mercifully with her whose love is lost to sight, and grant that we may meet again in endless day, where patient hope is crowned with everlasting love.”

Caroline's entrance was not heard by the

praying man, so she stood spellbound, watching and listening to her father's words, and when he concluded, and arose and discovered her, she almost dropped her basket. Finally she stammered, "I am Caroline, sir."

Her father caught her in his arms, and kissing her affectionately, said, "My dear daughter, my long-neglected darling, can you forgive your unfortunate father?"

Caroline answered, "I am ignorant, sir, of any harm you may have done me."

"Don't you know, my darling, what I have done?"

"I know that my mother is very unhappy, and that it has all come about since my grandfather's death; before that we lived very happily together, although mamma was always very sorrowful."

"Ah, my dear, it's a sad, sad world, and sorrow comes about without our desire to make it."

Caroline changed the subject by saying, "Papa, I have brought some luncheon; will you try to eat something?"

Her father looked at her and smiled.

Caroline then spread the repast upon the little table, and taking her father by the arm led

him gently to it. He attempted to eat, more to gratify her than to appease his appetite, for that seemed to have left him. Caroline noticed this, and stepping up to him and throwing her arms around his neck, said, "My dear papa, I have not missed you because I never knew you; but mother, who has always cherished your memory, feels your lost love so keenly that she is not the same person to me. Come home with me, dear papa, for her sake. I fear she will grieve and die, and then I shall be left alone."

"Am I nothing to you, Caroline?" the unfortunate man asked.

"Oh! yes! yes!" Caroline hastily qualified; "I shall try to love you, but I suppose it must come gradually. I hardly know what to love you for, yet."

"Oh, is it so?" the poor man sighed.

"I will begin to love you at once," Caroline timidly ventured, "if you will come home with me."

"Yes, I will come, my dear. Take me to my room, the room of my boyhood. I will be more at ease there. I am strange; I feel it, and I suppose your poor mother feels it. I don't mean to be so, but I feel like you—it must come gradually."

Caroline took his arm, and father and daughter wended their way to the mansion. Caroline was too old to ask childish questions, and not old enough nor familiar enough to enter upon a conversation touching what was nearest his heart; so she remained silent, happy in the thought that her mother would be pleased.

They had gone but a short distance from the cottage when two urchins came towards them tugging a basket of bones. Caroline's face grew crimson, and she was about to shake her head at them; but the boys failed to identify their old friend, and possibly observing the flush on his daughter's cheeks, he passed without noticing them.

George Croyden passed through the grounds with his daughter, and reaching the hall door, they entered, Caroline still clinging to him, and leading him up the stairway, until he reached his room.

As Caroline started to open the door, he said, "Not yet, my child. Show me your room."

Caroline led him to a room, and said, "This room is also my mother's room; we have never been separated from each other since I was a child."

He sighed.

“And this room was grandpa’s,” she said, “poor grandpa died in it.”

“I know, my dear,” he replied.

“Mother told you?”

“I was here.”

Caroline looked at him inquiringly and somewhat timidly.

“Yes, my dear, I stole into this room, and spoke to my father before he died; he recognised me.”

Caroline looked at him in anguish, fearing for his sanity, and then led him to his room.

As Caroline opened the door, her father stood on the threshold and gazed around the room. Not a thing had been disturbed since the day he left, prior to his marriage with Catherine Penistan. His mother had scrupulously kept the key, and after her death Sir Anthony Croyden directed that his lost boy’s room be left undisturbed.

How fond recollections of his boyhood must have flitted across his vision; what glorious days when nothing marred his happiness, and everything was like a dream!

He entered and sat in a rocking chair, but still gazed about him as though longing to

dwell upon the memory of his youth; and finally, having surfeited himself therewith, he said, "Caroline, kindly send me a pitcher of water, and a glass."

Caroline returned with the water, and her father drank deeply.

Caroline took a seat in the room, simply to show a desire to share her father's company, but the introduction had come so abruptly that she said very little, beyond answering a few simple questions. Her father seemed too much depressed to commune with her.

As the night drew on, Caroline lit a lamp, and her father, who had grown restless, said: "Caroline, my dear, kiss me good-night."

Caroline embraced him affectionately, but instantly drew back, saying, "Papa, how warm you are!"

"Yes, my dear," he responded, "I am burning up with fever. I need rest, leave me, my darling."

CHAPTER XXVIII

A PATIENT

CAROLINE hastened to her mother, and explained her father's condition, and Catherine went immediately to her husband's room, and knocking, entered without waiting for a response. Going up to him and kissing him, she said: "George, my dear, you need rest and care, you have been careless of your health of late; let me send for the doctor so that he can prescribe for you."

"No! no!" he replied hastily, "I need only rest. Oh! will I ever rest?"

Catherine's bosom heaved with anguish; it was not necessary for her to doubt the meaning of the last remark.

"Go to bed, my dear," she answered, "and I will prepare a cooling draught for you."

When Catherine returned, she found her husband in bed; he had thrown the coverings

back from his chest, as though the combined weight and heat were oppressive. His hands lay on the coverlid.

Approaching the bedside, she raised his head, and assisted him to drink. His body burned like coals of fire.

As Catherine laid his head back on the pillows she kissed him again and again. "My poor, dear George," she said, "you are very sick."

She left the room and summoning the butler, directed him to go for the doctor; she then sought her daughter and they awaited his arrival.

The little doctor soon appeared, and Catherine explained to him her husband's fevered condition, and said, "I want you to remain here to-night, so as to be in readiness, in case your services are needed."

"Yes! yes!" answered the doctor, "but I must know what to do; you say he is burning with fever, I must know what kind of fever; dear! dear! we have no fever cases in East Looe, nor anything else for that matter. Let me go to him!"

"Softly, don't disturb him."

"Yes, softly, I won't disturb him."

They both went on tip-toe to the door of the sick man's room; it had been left ajar, so that they might hear him if he called.

George was throwing his arms about and murmuring, yet he appeared to be asleep.

The doctor stepped to the bedside and felt the sick man's pulse, looking at his watch the while. He shook his head at the result; then he slipped a fever gauge under the patient's arm-pit, and after the lapse of a few minutes took it out and examined it, then turning to Catherine, he beckoned her from the room.

"Don't be frightened," he said, "but your husband has an alarming attack of fever. It will take a few days to decide what kind, but you must have an attendant, a nurse, to wait upon him."

"I will nurse him," Catherine replied.

"You cannot! you must not!" replied the little doctor.

"I can! and I will!" answered Catherine emphatically.

"You imperil your life, and that of your daughter," the doctor continued.

"My daughter will keep away."

"At least have a nurse to help you."

"That we will discuss later."

The doctor called for wine glasses, and water, and spoons; and taking sundry powders from his grip, he proceeded to install a miniature apothecary's shop in the hallway outside the bedroom.

"I will take him in hand the minute he awakens," the little man said.

He had not long to wait, for the patient's moaning became groans, and the tossing of his arms developed into the movement of his whole body; the fever sat heavily upon him, and in his agony he turned from side to side and rolled his head continuously.

Catherine placed her arms around him, and laying her head on the pillow beside his own, whispered, "George, my dear, the doctor is here."

George laid a hand on her head, and patted it, exclaiming in his agony, "Let me die! I'm lost to the world!"

"Don't, my dear, don't worry, I implore you," said Catherine.

Here the doctor interposed, saying, "It will never do, madam; he must be treated as a sick man or nothing will save him."

The poor woman released him and stood

back, and the doctor administered some of the liquid medicine he had prepared.

“You had better prepare for a long siege,” the doctor said to Catherine. “He has got it badly, whatever it is.”

Catherine knew what it was; she knew it was brought on by lack of proper food, worry, and lost affection, and as she reflected upon it all, she cried bitterly.

Taking a rocking chair in the hall, directly outside the door, so that she could see the patient, her thoughts became wrapped in her unhappy condition.

As the night advanced the patient became delirious, and he would call out, “Margaret, don’t leave me, come back to me,” interspersed with calls of “rags and bones.”

Catherine entered the room and taking one of his hands tried to hold it, but the patient was too restless.

The doctor administered another draught, and the sick man finally fell into a doze.

CHAPTER XXIX

MARGARET

GOING to the library, Catherine remained in a thoughtful mood for several minutes, then proceeded to indite a letter as follows:

“CROYDEN MANOR, EAST LOOE, *June 14, 1867.*

“*Mrs. George Croyden, Exeter:*

“DEAR MADAM.—George is desperately sick with a fever, and in his delirium calls for you. Your presence may save his life, and I pray you to come with all speed.

“George’s home is open to you, and I will try to make you welcome, for the love that George once bore me.

“Sincerely,

“CATHERINE CROYDEN.”

This letter was franked for special delivery, and late in the day a telegram was received from Exeter, announcing that the recipient was on her way to East Looe.

A carriage was in waiting at the station, with Caroline to welcome her. As soon as the train arrived Caroline descended from the carriage and went unto the platform.

Very few passengers ever made East Looe

a stopping-place, and there was no difficulty in identifying the beautiful woman who, assisted by the conductor, got off the train. Caroline stepped up to her, and said, "I am Caroline Croyden; mamma sent me to welcome you."

"Oh! my dear," said the lady, kissing Caroline, "I hope I may take this liberty with you, and I also hope that I shall prove deserving of your mother's very kind condescension. I am so unhappy, and so must you all be."

They both entered the carriage, and having become seated, the lady continued, "Do you know the circumstances connected with me, my dear?"

"I know there is something unusual, and that mamma is very unhappy, and papa likewise. I heard him offer such a sad prayer, that I have been full of wonder ever since," replied Caroline.

"Your papa is very tender-hearted, my dear, and I fear this sickness will be severe upon him; but I hope he will be spared for your mother's sake."

Catherine Croyden was a woman of commanding presence, and of that type of beauty which carries in the expression the depth of the soul. Her quiet life had assisted in preserv-

ing her youthful appearance, and her long sorrow seemed to add a charm to her natural graces, instead of detracting from them. Knowing her own charms, it was perfectly natural she should hope to excel her rival, and it was with a palpitating heart that she awaited the arrival of the carriage. As Margaret's stately form entered the hall, Catherine stepped forward, and taking her by both hands, kissed her on the cheek, saying, "My heart is open to you, my dear."

Margaret was not slow in returning the salutation, and replied: "I am sure, my dear, that this propitious welcome will unite our hearts as one. I always loved your memory when we thought you dead; I love you more than ever now I realise how good you are."

Catherine escorted her to the room prepared for her reception, and saying, "I will return in a few minutes," went to her own room.

Falling on her knees she buried her face in her hands, muttering between her tears, "There is no hope; she is good as well as beautiful." She remained in this attitude for several minutes, and then arising, she straightened her dishevelled hair, and hiding the appearance of grief, returned to Margaret's room.

CHAPTER XXX

EARLY PROGNOSTICATIONS

MARGARET had changed her travelling dress for a simple cotton gown.

Catherine looked at her sweet face, and said: "I don't wonder that George is sick, I think it has been brought about more through the thought of losing you than all his other troubles."

Margaret, in evident surprise, replied: "You have been weeping, my dear; pray do not do so; tears cannot avail to remedy the past; it is a very unfortunate case for all of us, and although it crushes my heart to lose George after living with him so happily for ten years, it is both his duty and mine to see that your life is made happy after your long forced widowhood. It was all a mistake, and I am sure George was ignorant of your being alive, for he was ever dwelling upon your memory."

"I always loved his memory too, and

thought him dead," Catherine replied, "and much as I love him now, I have no intention of making him unhappy. I want him to get well, and if I can only see him and speak to him as I did before we were married, I will be satisfied; but I feel he will never be the same to me again."

"Does he act indifferently towards you?" Margaret inquired.

"He is so perplexed that he doesn't seem to know what to do," Catherine replied. "He probably realises what his duty is, and yet his heart is not his; in other words, I know his love is so intense that it can only be bestowed upon one. He loves me in memory—his love towards me would be deeper if I were dead."

"Oh! my dear, don't say so; George would not have it so: he is too noble to wish anybody dead, even if he had to lose all," Margaret replied.

"I do not mean that he wished me dead, but that with all his great love centred on you, he would in loving you think of the love I had borne him once," said Catherine.

"Ah, my dear, he thinks so still, he never tired talking about you, but we will see after we have nursed him back to life."

The two women then walked to the sick man's room.

The little doctor having no patient elsewhere had taken up his abode at the mansion and took his meals with the butler. He was now asleep in an easy chair outside the patient's room.

Catherine and Margaret passed in and gazed on the sick man, who was sleeping peacefully.

Margaret contented herself with gazing upon his face whilst Catherine took his hand and remarked, "The fever is still heavy upon him. I feel that all we can do for the present is to be near him so, in case he calls, we can go to him. In his first delirium he repeatedly called for you."

"Did he not call for you also?" asked Margaret.

"Not at all," Catherine replied.

"It is customary for fever patients to forget those they love and call upon those who are not so dear to them," remarked Margaret.

"It is very considerate of you to say so, my dear, but George's case is an exception," replied Catherine.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE VAGARIES OF A FEVER PATIENT

IT would be uninteresting to recount the everyday life at the mansion during the illness of George Croyden. The fever developed into typhoid, and had to run its customary time before a change could be expected. Before the time had elapsed, however, the patient was in such a dangerous condition a specialist was summoned from the metropolis, who, after remaining until the critical period was over, conferred with the local doctor, and afterwards informed the ladies that everything was being done that could be done.

On several occasions when the patient was delirious he called in loud tones for Margaret, and when she appeared, at Catherine's urgent request, and took his hand, he quieted down. At other times he would gaze quietly on Catherine, if she alone were present, but if Margaret would appear, he would take her hand

and press it, and draw her face down on the pillow. In consequence of this, Margaret refrained from visiting the sick room unless sent for, and she spent the long hours in conversing with Caroline, to whom she became greatly attached, and they could be seen daily walking about the lawn, their arms entwined about each other. Sometimes they would go to the cliffs, and then Margaret would become silent in gazing across the ocean, and at such times her thoughts would be carried far, far away, to another home across the seas, where her life had been one long day of uninterrupted happiness.

Catherine and Margaret were also frequently together, although they did not go beyond sight of the mansion, lest they should escape the sick man's call. They acted more like affectionate sisters than women whose relation towards each other would naturally create the greatest antipathy.

Understanding, as they did, the exact conditions which brought about the second marriage, they had none but the greatest sympathy for each other; there was no desire to cause the slightest pain to each other, and their united desire was that George might live, although it

was not difficult to realise that one of them was to love in secret and alone.

There was no reference made to this, however; the two women enjoyed each other's society for the goodness which each possessed, and they had evidently resolved nothing should interfere with that happy condition.

During the sick man's ravings the cries of "Margaret," would be interspersed with "rags and bones," and on one occasion Margaret asked Catherine what she supposed it meant.

"My dear, I would like to spare you the explanation," Catherine answered, "but it is well to illustrate that a sick man's ravings may not be all vagaries. Some months ago East Looe was surprised by the apparition of a man who paraded the streets on certain days calling 'rags and bones,' and who settled down as a resident of the village. He was a sort of a recluse, nobody could get him to converse or even to give his name. He it was who saved me from drowning, he it was who came into court during a trial to test the validity of my marriage, and produced the missing certificate."

"Oh! say no more, my dear," interrupted

Margaret, "it was George himself; but why did he assume such a disguise?"

"It was his great love—for you."

"But can't you see that if he didn't love you, he would not have risked his life to rescue you from drowning," Margaret replied.

"George would do nothing unmanly," said Catherine.

After this the two women became wrapped in thought.

The crisis having been passed, the patient began slowly to recover, and about the sixth week the fever left him as helpless as a babe. His flesh had dwindled away until he was a mere skeleton. There were no ravings now, the sick man was perfectly conscious. It would take careful nursing yet to make him strong again. His long fast had created an appetite so ravenous that he once begged for substantial food, but Catherine informed him gently but firmly it was forbidden; he never asked again.

On one occasion both the women were present at his bedside, when with an imploring look he asked why they had nursed him back to life.

"So that you can enjoy the sunshine, my dear," Catherine replied.

"I feel I will never enjoy it again," he answered.

"I wouldn't feel that way, George," Margaret said; "get well and we will both try and make your life happy."

He looked at her inquiringly, and said: "Can you ever forgive me, Margaret?"

"We must learn to forget it, George, and hide our disappointment. It was a deplorable mistake."

The convalescent buried his head in the pillows and moaned.

After a few days in which the patient gained considerable strength, Margaret asked Catherine to take a walk with her, and during the walk she told her that she had decided to return to Exeter, and later to sail to her home in Buenos Ayres.

"Oh! stay with us, my dear," Catherine replied. "I will not be jealous; I have gotten to love you more than I can tell."

"It can't be, my dear; George is your lawful husband and he must fulfil his duty towards you, and although I love him, I shall hide it for your sake."

"Don't go, Margaret," was Catherine's response.



“ Catherine took his head in her lap, and burst into tears ”

CHAPTER XXXII

ONLY A WOMAN'S LOVE

ONE day Margaret had been absent with Caroline in visiting the old church and other places of interest in the vicinity; George had missed his daughter, and arising from his chair, he tottered over to Catherine, and kissing her, said, "Has Margaret left us?"

"No, my dear, and I have begged her to remain with us."

He kissed her again, saying, "You good, kind Catherine, and what was her answer?"

"I am afraid she will not stay."

"Beg her to stay a while, Catherine; I cannot so soon forget her; I am trying hard. Tell her not to leave me yet," and with trembling limbs the unfortunate man sought to return to his chair, and fell.

Catherine's heart was already full, and she sprang forward and kneeling beside the prostrate man, took his head in her lap, and burst into tears.

At this moment Margaret and Caroline entered the hall. Margaret tried to escape unseen, but Catherine called upon her to help her to raise him.

After assisting George to his chair, the two women went into the library, and Catherine explained the cause which led up to George's fall, and said, "Margaret, try to make up your mind to remain here, and whatever befalls, you will find me the same as I have ever been. I only desire that I may see him."

Margaret promised to remain a few weeks longer, in hopes that George would become reconciled to his wife; but several days afterwards the latter came to her and said, "It is no use for me to deceive myself; George loves you so desperately that he can never be anything to me but the sad-visaged man we see him; take him to your heart; I will go away with my daughter and try to be happy in knowing that I am not an obstacle in your path."

"You do not know me, Catherine!" Margaret answered. "Unless George changes his conduct towards you, I will return to my home and forget him."

"Ah, dearest, you know not what you say;

it is impossible for him, impossible for you. I do not blame George, it is simply beyond human power not to love you."

Margaret disregarded this remark, and continued: "I find that the strain is too much for you, too much for me; we must part, and bitter as the pang will be, we must know the worst. To-morrow I shall arrange to confer with George, and end my visit here. It will be best for all concerned," and then the unhappy woman bent over and wept bitterly, and Catherine, throwing her arms around her neck, shared her grief.

Later in the day Margaret was seen at the edge of the cliff looking across the waters. Whether her eyes were really in the direction of her home, which lay so many miles across the ocean; whether she possessed the instinct of the birds, we can never tell, but her thoughts were on that home, where—not so long ago—such tender happiness abounded. She would return with her boy to that home, and amid the scenes of her girlhood try to outlive the bitterness of the present.

The following day Margaret spent in watching an opportunity to find George in such a spot that she could converse with him alone.

She knew the scene would be an unhappy one, and she wished it to be sacred even from Catherine's gaze; but George seemed to be conscious that some evil was impending, something unhappy was about to happen. He may have discovered it in Margaret's eyes, or his own heart may have inspired him; but he carefully avoided everybody that day. Late in the afternoon, however, on entering the hallway and finding Margaret standing there alone, he hurried into the library; Margaret quickly followed, and on entering the room, found George making his egress through the window unto the lawn.

"Poor fellow," she ejaculated, "I feel that I am hounding him to his death. I must leave without speaking to him."

That night George retired early, and Margaret went to his room, the room he had occupied alone ever since he had arrived at the mansion. Knocking and receiving no response, she called, "George, it is Margaret, may I come in?" Still there was no answer. She opened the door fearfully, and George stood by his bed looking towards the door.

As Margaret approached him, his eyes were riveted on hers; he seemed to know what her

errand was, for he said: "My dear Margaret, if you love me, don't say it; if you don't love me, kill me, for I shall surely die. Why have I escaped the angry waves, and the fever's fiery breath, if it is to die a death more terrible?"

Margaret sat on the bed, and drew George down by her side, then placing her arms around his neck, she said: "George, my dear, listen patiently to me. Have you resolved upon any plans for the future?"

George, with downcast eyes, shook his head, and answered, "It is impossible."

"But, my dear, we can't go on for ever thus; you must remember your first love, it is your sacred duty."

"I will! I do!" the unfortunate man replied.

"Your wife is an affectionate woman, and loves you devotedly, and your daughter Caroline is a sweet, lovely girl."

"I love them sincerely," George replied.

"Think of her, George, left as a young girl, sorrowing for you, and remaining true to your memory all these long years; consider how Caroline, poor girl, was brought up without a father's love. Think how your lawful wife

feels at the knowledge that your affection is wavering."

"Margaret, I have thought! for months I wandered about without seeing you, trying to follow the path where duty lies, but the heart stays me; I love them, but I cannot let you go. Catherine was my wife only a few months, and it took years to relinquish her memory. We have loved and cherished each other for ten long years, how is it possible for me to do this thing; and you, Margaret, can you so soon forget me?"

"George, my dear, listen! I shall never forget you; my heart is breaking whilst I talk to you, but my woman's heart sees the injustice to your wife, too; think how she must suffer; let me but go away a little while, and you will gradually accustom yourself to the new conditions."

"Never, Margaret; don't leave me; I will do better. I have not fully recovered yet. Stay with us, so that I can see you, and I will do all you wish."

"You know nothing you could ask of me, George, would be refused, if it were possible to grant it, but this is so impossible."

"Oh! my love! don't say so! I can't live

without you! let me remove to the cottage, and you and Catherine live here together; any place will do for me, if I only know you are near."

However much Margaret had steeled her heart, this appeal was too much for her, and she burst into tears, weeping bitterly.

"Dear heart," she said, "forgive me. I do not want to lose sight of you either," and she promised to remain, if he would only learn to love Catherine more.

"I will! I will! at once!" the unhappy man promised.

"Seek her, George, and speak kindly and affectionately to her."

"I will! I will!" he answered.

She pressed his hand and started to leave the room; he looked upon her retreating figure, and called after her in a reproving voice, "Margaret! is that all?"

"That's all," she replied, and hesitated, for there was a pleading in the question beyond the meaning of words.

Then she returned, and pressing his head to her bosom, kissed him passionately, saying, "My heart will never change towards you my dear, take courage." Then she left the room.

CHAPTER XXXIII

FAREWELL SCENES

WHATEVER George's ideas were concerning his duties to his wife, and notwithstanding his promises to Margaret that he would fulfil those duties, it was evident that the unfortunate man was unable to carry them out.

There is no doubt that he had a willingness at heart to be affectionate towards her on whom his first love had been bestowed, but the deeper love that had been engrafted in him for Margaret, through years of uninterrupted happiness, could not be effaced. The new life had so entirely absorbed the old it was impossible for him to abandon it.

No one could discern this clearer than Catherine, no one could realise it better than Margaret.

It was painful to see how George, after watching Margaret with sorrowful reflections

at heart, would attempt to be gracious to Catherine. Once, indeed, he kissed her in Margaret's presence, but it was executed in such a clumsy manner that the effect on both indicated it had been better left undone.

George and Catherine would walk together, and they would have a common interest in inspecting the flowers, or discussing those matters which occur in everyday life. Catherine felt it was useless to play the part of affection with him, but she endeavoured in many ways to show him that she still loved him. They appeared to feel they were compelled to be close together, yet the one having a secret disposition to pull himself away.

In her anxiety to convince Catherine that she desired her uninterrupted happiness, Margaret was anxious to find an excuse for leaving England; but it is safe to say that she had no idea that George would ever love his wife devotedly again.

The weeks passed by, and conditions at the mansion were about the same, when one day Margaret received a letter, stating that her mother was very ill, and that if she desired to see her alive, she must hasten home without delay.

Margaret showed the letter to Catherine, and informed her that the time had arrived for parting.

“But for your duty to your mother, I would never consent to your leaving us,” Catherine assured her, “but it is the inevitable. Something tells me, however, that I shall never see you again, but if anything should happen to me, Margaret, take George to your heart again at once; don’t let him suffer longer on my account. I do not blame him, it is impossible for him to change his love from you to me; his love for me was deep enough once, but a few hours of fateful events were sufficient to take him from me.”

“It was the same in my case, my dear Catherine; I no sooner received word that you were alive than we became separated in body, but not in soul. How is it best to break the news to George? It will never do to leave without bidding him good-bye.”

“It would have been better for you, Margaret, if you had never learnt that I was alive, or that George had never returned to me; but I know the goodness of your heart, and that nothing will change the present conditions as long as I live; if I thought otherwise I

would beg you to take George along with you."

"It cannot be, my dear Catherine," Margaret replied. "George is your lawful husband, and as such, bitter as the pang may be to him, he must endure it just as you have borne your sorrow."

In order that they might be together as much as possible during the short time that would elapse before they parted, Catherine assisted Margaret in packing up such necessary articles as she would require on the voyage.

Catherine prevailed upon Margaret to have her boy brought to East Looe, and the butler was despatched with a letter to Queen's College, Exeter, explaining the necessity of his immediate attendance, another missive having been mailed to the faculty giving the butler's credentials.

When the boy arrived at East Looe, it is doubtful whose greeting was the warmest, for Catherine took him in her arms, and hugged and kissed him till the poor boy perspired, then Caroline came in for her share, although her embrace was more gentle and of shorter duration.

As soon as the father saw him, he caught

him in his arms, and in a few minutes they were together underneath the rookery, and George was explaining to his son the habits of those noisy, gregarious birds. Then he took him to the cliffs, and was evidently explaining to his son how he had plunged headlong from it in order to save—a lady. Then he took him to the beach and showed him the limpets and mussels adhering to the rocks; they hunted for periwinkles and hermit crabs, and lured the shrimps from their hiding-places in the shallow pools left by the receding tide; there were lots of interesting things to be found on the beach at East Looe, that a boy at Buenos Ayres would never dream of. Then George took him to the rope-walk, and through the old church, and to the top of the old tower; it was daylight, and the old clock ticked in its proper place, and the bells were bells and did not look like decapitated Amazons, and the ropes dangled as ordinary ropes should. It is only in the darksome hours of night, when frail womanhood is about, that things seem different from what they really are.

Then George showed his boy the font in which he was baptised when a child, and then they passed the crypts in the wall containing

the old armour; but George knew not how one of these became inhabited by one of the old knights, and came near frightening his young wife to death. Better had her life ended then, perhaps, in the old church, for sorrowing without hope is a living death. And lastly they came to the vestry room, and George peeped in. He glanced at the window; it was unbroken now. He did not enter, but his boy did, and espying the oak chest, pulled out a large book. It was the Register of Marriages. The boy opened it. His eyes glistened as he turned over its pages. Then he said, "What a funny book—so old-fashioned. What is it for, papa?"

George turned pale, and answered, "It is a register of the persons who get married from this parish, my son."

"And is your name in it, papa?"

George hesitated for a moment, and with a trembling voice answered, "Not now, my son."

"When I am married I shall have my name put in a Register just like this," the boy exclaimed.

"Come, my son," and George walked out of the old church with downcast eyes, for his heart was troubled.

Arriving at the mansion, George took his son to his bedroom, and explained to him that it was the room he had assigned to himself when a boy. A long-handled shrimp-net stood in a corner, and the boy, not knowing its use, asked if it was used for catching butterflies.

George as yet knew nothing of the awful doom awaiting him.

As the evening advanced, he requested that his son be allowed to sleep with him, and retired to his room.

Somewhat later Margaret knocked at his door and entered. George arose and looked at her suspiciously, but Margaret requested him to retain his seat.

For a moment Margaret seemed at a loss how to act. She evidently had intended explaining the nature of her errand, but her heart failed her, and she passed the letter, notifying her of her mother's illness, to him.

George took the letter much as he would a death warrant, and after having perused it, his eyes became riveted upon it. The most dreadful calamity that could befall frail humanity was about to happen to him.

As George remained silent, Margaret said,

“Think not, George, that I am anxious to leave you. I had decided never to leave England until I had seen you both comparatively happy; for I feel that after these awful experiences neither of us will be transcendently happy again. But the time has arrived when I must depart. My mother calls for me, and our boy and she are all I have left to comfort me; and if my mother leaves me for that better land, it will be a lonesome life for me at my old home—that home that was once so full of sunshine.” And then falling on her knees, and nestling her head against his bosom, she continued, “George, take courage from what I am going to say to you. My love is as deep for you as it has ever been, and ever will be. I shall miss you as much as you will me. We must live in the reflection of those happy days that have passed. Golden days cannot last forever; we must experience some stormy scenes. Time will doubtless heal our wounds, and we can live in the fond reflection of what might have been. At night when you are sad and weary, remember that although I am far away, my heart is ever close to you.”

Then she put her arms around his neck and kissed him, and he pressed her madly to his

bosom, and his tearful silence betrayed the depth of his grief.

This was their last meeting before Margaret sailed away. She spent several hours with Catherine after her meeting with George, and at midnight, with her boy, she left them for Buenos Ayres.

Well it was that the good ship met with no storm to impede its onward course, for when Margaret arrived at her home, without having an opportunity to change her garments, she was ushered into the presence of her mother, who was dying. Sorrow had done its work with her, and she had gradually failed in health since her husband's death.

Margaret went to her mother's bedside, and bending over and kissing her, said, "Dear mother, I have returned to you."

"None too soon, my daughter. I am very weak. I was afraid you would be too late. And George, where is he?"

"He has been very ill, too, mother. For weeks we despaired of his recovery. He wanted to come along with me, but his condition would not admit of it, and I must impart the kiss he gave me for you."

"You are truthful, my dear? But then,

you are too noble to be otherwise." And then the dying woman said, "I feel your presence has encouraged me. Send for your harp, Margaret, and sing to me as you used to do in those happy days before your father died."

The harp was brought, and to its accompaniment Margaret sang those songs which her mother loved. At first her voice trembled, for her heart was more sorrowful than it is the fate of most women to bear; but as she proceeded, her melodious voice thrilled through the empty rooms so that the servants congregated in a group to listen, and tears filled their eyes as they realised the additional sorrow awaiting their beautiful young mistress. Her mother seemed to be beating time with her hand at first, then she became still. The music had borne her into the spirit land.

The poor woman discovering that her mother was dead, threw herself on her knees beside the bed, and cried, "Father and mother and husband gone; there is only one left!" and the echo answered, "Only one left."

There were many who shed tears at the funeral of Margaret's mother, but they were mostly shed at sight of the noble woman whose bowed form indicated the anguish of her soul.

CHAPTER XXXIV

DEATH OF CATHERINE

THE day following Margaret's departure was a very quiet one at the mansion.

Notwithstanding Catherine's urgent wish that George should accompany her to see her safely aboard the vessel, Margaret objected. It might have been that she desired no doubt to arise in Catherine's mind concerning her sincerity, and it might have been that she was afraid that George would at the last moment insist upon following her; instead, therefore, Caroline and the old butler accompanied her.

Catherine met George in the hall, and going up to him, she took him gently by the arm, saying, "Will you join me at breakfast, George?" and he suffered himself to be led to the dining-room, but he partook of little food. He had already discovered that the butler was missing, and finding no one at the breakfast table, he divined that Margaret had departed

on her long journey home. He had some regard for his wife, however, even in this hour of grief, for he stepped up to her and kissed her, saying, "Don't worry about my actions, Catherine. I shall try to turn my heart towards you, but the time is not yet. I have loved none but you and her, and it is impossible to forget her."

"I don't want you to forget her, George. It would make me more unhappy to know that you did. Margaret is the most noble and lovable woman in the world, and I love her devotedly myself."

"Thank you for saying so," George replied, and he wandered out on the grounds and finally seated himself underneath the rookery, as though desiring to be near something that would change the current of his unhappy thoughts. But he did not remain long. He wandered about from place to place, without any apparent object but to forget himself.

During the day Catherine also came upon the lawn and walked about conversing with him. She had given up all idea of ever trying to win him back to her; she felt that his love could never be the same, and she preferred to live in the memory of the past.

On the third day Caroline and the old butler returned. Caroline was very unhappy; she had recently been crying, and she could hardly refrain from doing so again as she entered the mansion.

The parting on board the vessel was very sad. On finding that his father was not going to accompany them, the boy cried, "I want my papa. I don't want to leave him. Stay with him, mamma," and he kept up this lament until his cries became so heartrending his mother had to be supported by the butler, whose eyes became dim with tears.

Caroline knelt and enfolded the boy in her arms, saying, "Papa will come to you, my brother, as soon as he is perfectly well. Don't grieve your mamma, dear." The little fellow sobbed bitterly and hid his face in his hands.

The captain of the boat came forward, and touching his cap, said, "I am sorry to separate you, ladies, but we have already waited beyond our usual time, especially for you."

"Poor dears," said an old gentleman, "it is too bad that mortals are gifted with the power to feel so sorrowful at parting."

Then the bell sounded its parting knell, and the vessel sped out into the ocean.

George met his daughter in the hall, and stepped forward and kissed her. He noticed her saddened face and said interrogatively, "They have gone, my daughter?"

"Yes, papa," said Caroline, at the same time bursting into tears, "and I shall miss them so. They cried so bitterly that I shall never be happy again."

George took out his handkerchief and started for his room, and his sobs could be heard long afterwards.

It is surprising how much sorrow the heart can bear without breaking, but time seemed in a measure to assuage George's grief over Margaret's departure; not that he changed in any way from his confirmed sad demeanour, but he roamed around the old walks he used to frequent when a boy, with no other apparent desire but to forget his troubles in the reminiscences of his boyhood.

Occasionally Catherine and he would walk together around the lawn, but there was never any display of the lover's affection.

Catherine had received a letter from Margaret stating that her mother had died a few minutes after her arrival. A correspondence was kept up between them of that character

which is only indulged in by those who discover the depth of each other's souls, or who have a lasting regard for each other.

Two years had elapsed since Margaret left East Looe, and Catherine had gradually become reduced in health, and finally was confined to her room. She never complained of George's attitude towards her, but on the contrary, insisted that he be present as much as possible at her bedside; and it was here that they renewed those happy recollections, broken off too early in their youth.

It was by her bedside that her beloved daughter, Caroline, was married to him who saved her life, and who loved her from the time new "worlds" were introduced to him.

At last, after several months, it became evident that the end was approaching, and George arose to call his daughter; but Catherine stopped him, saying, "George, after I am dead, go to Margaret, embrace her for me, and tell her I missed her sweet face this side of the sea." Then drawing his head down on the pillow beside her, she continued, "I have often thought what a trivial occurrence will sometimes change the current of one's life, and I have wondered what our lives might have been

had not the fates separated us. It seems so easy to picture how great our happiness would have been, but for some reason we were prevented from realising it. Yet through all my sorrow I loved you, George, and your absence made the heart grow fonder." Catherine remained in deep reverie for a few minutes, then she resumed, "I want you to think of me as you left me at my childhood's home, what seems to me now so long ago. Promise me that, George."

"I will, my dear Catherine," he answered, "but I want you to live, so that we can resume that love where the fates separated us. Forgive me, Catherine! forgive me, my love! I shall miss you."

Catherine's face lit up with a heavenly smile. She was happy in the thought of this avowal, although she was aware it was impossible of realisation.

She lingered along a few hours, perfectly conscious of those about her, and when her last moments approached she kissed her daughter a last farewell, and as she took her husband's hand, she drew him to her and whispered, "Don't forget," and her pure and noble spirit passed away.

Catherine was buried in the family mausoleum alongside Lady Croyden, to carry out the latter's dying wish; otherwise it had been her desire to be buried in the little churchyard, alongside her parents.

George waited around for several months, knowing that if he made any unseemly haste in leaving, without giving due respect to his wife's memory, Margaret would resent it.

In the meantime, Caroline had taken up the correspondence with Margaret, and had informed her of her mother's death.

One day George received a few lines from Margaret stating:

"Our boy is very sick. He calls for you. Speed if you would see him."

That day George spent several hours in the mausoleum, and then notifying his daughter that he was going to Buenos Ayres, he bid her an affectionate good-bye and departed on his journey.

CHAPTER XXXV

FILLED TO OVERFLOWING

MARGARET having buried her mother, was left with her son to occupy the mansion with its many empty rooms, for the servants kept to the first story underneath the verandah, as was the custom in Buenos Ayres.

For months she was bowed down with a sorrow which knew no healing, and when her boy was absent from her side she would wander through the empty rooms, and the echoes would resound in mournful refrains; so mournful, indeed, that the angels might look down from the heights and pity her.

But even her cup was not yet full, for at last her son was taken grievously ill. The hope which had buoyed her up through all her adversity, in having her son to comfort her, was now hanging in the balance; and she prayed that if her boy could not be spared to her, that her soul too might take its flight.

The sick boy had constantly called for his

father, and one day, after an unusually sick period, the poor boy said, "Mamma, will papa never come? I feel I can't wait much longer."

"Yes, my dear," the unfortunate woman replied, "he is coming. Live, my boy, to see him;" and then her heart became so heavy she left the sick room, so that her grief would not worry him, and wandered through the great vacant house wringing her hands.

Blow, ye winds, if ever ye blew good; waft him to the shore to his boy who so fondly hopes.

Another dread night of watching without hope, and the morning broke.

"Will papa come soon, mamma? I am so tired."

"Yes, my love, he will be here this morning, I feel that——" and then the unfortunate woman once more left the sick room. Her heart was breaking. She went to a distant room and the pent-up anguish burst from her.

"George!" she cried, "are you coming!" and then through fear and love and anguish, she screamed, "George! George! he will die!"

Then a voice which sent a thrill through her echoed through the empty rooms, "Margaret, my darling, where art thou?"

She rushed to him, her eyes bedewed with tears. "Oh! George! I fear it is too late!" and she hastened with him to the dying boy. He was alive, and had heard his father's voice.

As his father bent over to kiss him, the boy with a last effort put his frail arms round his neck, saying, "Oh! papa, I have missed you. Mamma and I have been so lonely. We will never part again, will we, papa?"

The father with tears streaming down his cheeks answered, "No, my son, never more. I have missed you also, but the fates willed it. Live, my boy, to let me know who I am, for I know not."

The boy was silent, and the father, alarmed, gazed upon his countenance. He was so happy in that he had at last seen his father, that it released the tension of the heart, and as he lay, he cast his eyes first upon his mother and then upon his father, and an angelic smile spread over his countenance. "I see her!" he said.

"Whom do you see, my son?" asked his mother.

The dying boy answered, "The Lady across the water; she is clothed in white, and she stands in the sunshine beckoning me." Then with a more gladsome smile and an effort to

raise himself, he whispered, "I am coming," and the young life which should have known no sorrow, but experienced it nevertheless, drifted away to the land that knows no parting, leaving its poor little house of clay for his parents to mourn over.

And they, poor frantic souls, already overburdened, took each other by the hand and wandered through the empty rooms, their heart-rending cries echoing, "We will never hear his voice again!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

A RESOLUTION

MARGARET was slow to recover from the shock this additional sorrow occasioned, and rarely left the boundary of the estate. Wherever she was seen, George was with her. They were devoted to each other, but the old love with its glad expression had disappeared, and in its place the sadness of both their lives had taken its place.

They wandered about as though in deep thought; indeed, the loss of their boy was ever present with them. They would sit on the verandah as in days of yore, and the mavis would sing just as sweetly as ever; but it was a sad song to the lovers. It reminded them of the days when there was no sorrow.

One evening as they were thus seated, George related to Margaret the death-bed scene of Catherine, and the message he was commissioned to communicate.

“Catherine was a noble woman,” Margaret replied; “but it has often flashed through my mind that if I had not enquired concerning your parents, Catherine would possibly have been alive to-day, comparatively happy in your memory, and that we likewise might be free from all the sorrow which my solicitude brought about.”

“Never mind, my love,” said George. “It was a righteous and a noble act; and although it is impossible to change one’s affection when once it has become firmly fixed, it is wise to discover beforehand that there is no obstacle.”

As they were wandering through the house one day, they stopped in the room in which their boy had died, as was their wont to do; and there they sat down.

“I wonder if they can see us?” Margaret remarked.

“We will never know until we cross the river,” George replied. Then, with his eyes fixed upon the harp which had remained in the room, he said, “Margaret, my love, you have not touched the harp since I arrived.”

“I feel I can never play the old tunes or sing those songs again. Perhaps when my spirit is free, and I have joined my loved ones

again, I then may sing the old songs through all eternity." Then seeing that George became more saddened at this speech, she arose, and taking the harp, she ran her fingers over the strings; then she sang Tom Moore's beautiful melody, "The harp that once through Tara's halls," and as she finished, the echoes came so gently, and from such a distance, that they seemed to be wafted from that land where Tara dwelt.

"Our boy loved so to hear it," Margaret said.

George kissed her and remarked, "Noticed thou that the echo came from afar?"

"Ah! if we only knew," the poor woman sighed.

Again her fingers swept the strings, but to an unknown tune; it was an improvisation from the heart; now low, the strains reverberated through the empty rooms as though wafted through the gothic arches of an ancient church; then ascending the scale, the delicate notes filled the soul with enchanting scenes, in which love, and beauty, and music ever dwell; scenes which mortals rarely realise. Finally the music modulated until its echoes were lost.

Margaret leaned on the harp a moment, and

said, "George, I feel this is the end of earthly music; my heart throbs so that it cannot endure much longer." Then as she advanced towards him, George clasped her to his bosom and kissed her, and led her to the verandah, saying, "The rooms are oppressive, my dear."

"Oppressive with sorrowful memories, George, and although those recollections kill me, I cannot leave them."

"Ah! my dear, if we could fly away and join them, what a relief it would be."

As the evening advanced, George fell in a deep reverie. Since his arrival at Margaret's home, he had been contented with the happiness her presence radiated, and he had not renewed his suit, nor in any way opposed her inclinations; but he had now become alarmed after her health.

As he walked up and down the verandah, Margaret approached to kiss him good-night. George took her in his arms and said to her, "My dear Margaret, your old home has no associations left, saving those that lie in the grave. We can honour the memories of our loved ones wherever we may be, although it is a comfort to be near them."

"I would not prevail upon you to relinquish

your home, did I not discover that your health is visibly failing. Come back with me, my darling. The sea-air and change of scenery will do you good. Besides, you are not a stranger there."

"Could you leave our boy, George?"

"We will lay him beside Catherine," George replied.

Margaret still remained enfolded in his arms, and as she hesitated to make reply, George used the strategy of whispering, "Say 'yes,' my dear, for my sake."

"Do you intend going at once, George?"

"As soon as rapid preparations will admit," he replied. "Your health demands it, Margaret."

"And your exilement from home, and the sorrow it brought about, entitles you to that blessed prospect. My love, I will go there and live with you."

"O happy day!" and George in his ecstasy kissed her again and again.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE WELCOME

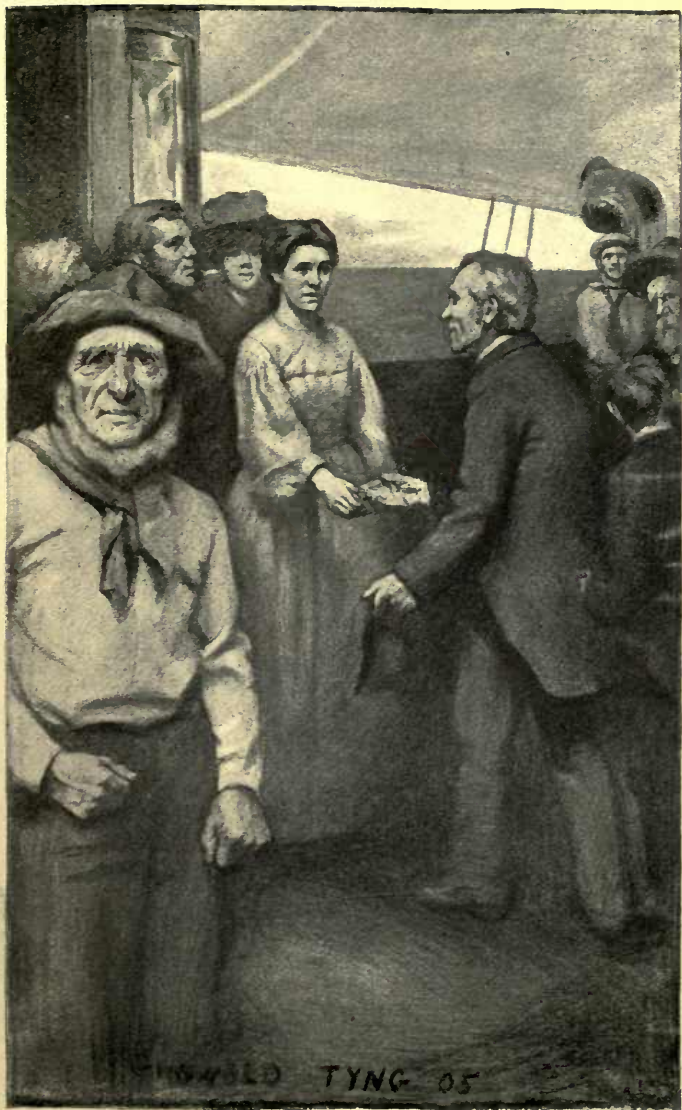
THERE is one event in the annals of East Looe the equal of which was never known in its limited history, and is not likely to occur again in the history of the world.

One delightful May morning an unusual commotion took place among its inhabitants.

The old fishermen, arrayed in their best, had congregated in full force on the brow of the cliff, provided with telescopes and fish-horns; and scattered on the slopes of the village the entire inhabitants, men, women, and children, in gala dress, had assembled and were patiently awaiting a signal.

Presently a stately yacht sailed into the harbour, and as it came within hailing distance, the fish-horns blared with such enthusiasm in their owners' determination to outdo each other, that old Boreas was for a time at a discount.

George Croyden had taken this means of



“Then the little doctor meekly appeared and shook hands”

transporting his loved one and her precious treasures to her new home.

As the yacht touched the dock, Caroline rushed into Margaret's arms, and fairly swallowed her up in her warm embrace.

Next came the rector, who bestowed several kisses on Margaret's cheeks. It was scandalous.

Old Nicholas Stocker, of fishing-moon fame, was standing perilously near, and muttered something about crab-bait; but it is fair to assume that he had no murderous designs on Margaret.

Then the little doctor meekly appeared and shook hands; and as if this was not welcome enough, the villagers in a body, at a signal from the organist, sang "Home, sweet home;" and although there were some stray voices, and some dissonant ones, and the old fishermen insisted upon using their fish-horns now and again, under the inspiration that there was music in them somewhere, it is perhaps well that they did, for Margaret, at the first sound of "home" felt like crying; but the ludicrous interposition of the fish-horns saved her, for she put her handkerchief to her eyes with intent to deceive, and hid her face in the lapel

of George's coat and laughed, oh! such a merry laugh.

Next came the sound of the merry bells from the old church tower. To be sure, they jangled and clanged at first, because the ringers were not accustomed to such sudden emotions. The quaint mottoes on those bells rang out in happy confusion; so much so, indeed, that the old rector who inscribed them in the long ago would never have recognised his work. But they finally got working into rhyme as they were originally designed to do, thus:

“ By music, minds a quiet temper know.
Nor swell too high, nor sink too low.
Music the fiercest grief can charm,
And fate's severest rage disarm.
Music can soften pain and ease,
And make despair and madness please.
Our joys below it can improve,
And antedate the bliss above.”

To the music of the bells the villagers, led by the rector, proceeded to the lawn at Croyden mansion, where they spent the day in games and feasting.

A carriage was waiting for Margaret, but following the example set by George on that fateful day when first they met, she placed her

arm in his and walked to the mausoleum, which they found decorated with flowers.

As they entered Margaret stooped and plucked a violet, and placed it on Catherine's tomb, which she knelt beside in the attitude of prayer.

The following Sunday the church was filled to overflowing, the villagers being drawn thither in the hope of again seeing the beautiful lady whom George had brought to their shores; and they were not disappointed.

After the lessons of the day there was another surprise in store, for the rector, holding a slip of paper in his hand, called in a loud voice, "I publish the banns of marriage between George Croyden, of this parish, and Margaret Glanville, late of Buenos Ayres. If any of you know of any just cause or impediment, why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it. This is the first time of asking."

The second and third challenges having been read on the two succeeding Sabbath days, the marriage was immediately solemnised, and accompanied by another feast to the villagers.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOME! SWEET HOME!

MANY years have elapsed since the occurrences in the preceding chapter.

The property at Buenos Ayres was placed in the hands of an agent; the land was rented, but it was impossible to find a tenant for the mansion. The agent had written that upon every occasion of his showing the interior to a prospective tenant, the echoes emanating from the various rooms were so plaintive that they fled in terror. Finally the premises had become known as "The house of many lamentations," and it is very likely it will fall into ruins.

A boundless love continues to prevail in the atmosphere of Croyden manor. The old quiet sanctity of the place has been enlivened by the merry voices of little children, of whom several bear the name of Croyden. They ramble around the old mansion in such numbers that

nothing is sacred to them. The hall is littered with Noah's arks, and the animals are distributed about in endless confusion, minus heads and legs, representing a miniature battle-field.

Margaret roams about with her husband over the large estate, and takes daily drives with him in the neighbourhood, enjoying the rural scenes.

After gratifying her curiosity with the sight of a gipsy encampment, Margaret never could be induced to go near one again, nor, indeed, would she allow them inside the estate. She very properly stated that one unhappy experience emanating from that quarter was enough for many generations of Croydens.

A beautiful tomb was placed beside Catherine's, for the reception of their lost boy, and the mausoleum was a weekly rendezvous.

George Croyden had the appellation of "Squire" added to his name by the villagers, which Margaret insisted made him a trifle vain.

Time and the presence of children has assisted in eradicating much of their early sorrow; but George informed Margaret he was unable to dismiss the horror which drove him to the necessity of appearing in the rôle of "Rags and Bones."

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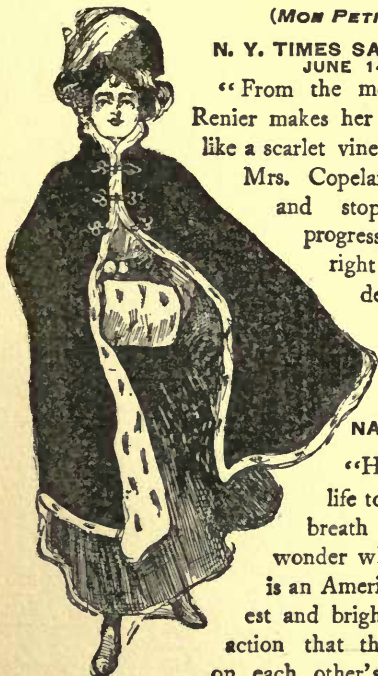
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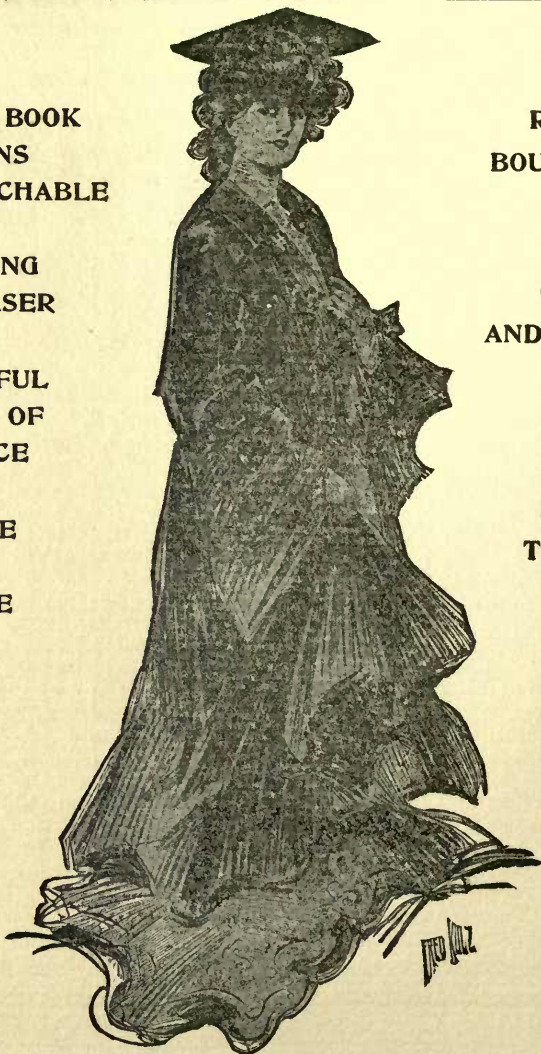


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